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ABSTRACT

The Basic Skills Program Improvement Process (BSPIP) is a peer review opportunity offered to New Jersey School districts by the Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education of the New Jersey State Department of Education. BSPIP is a project designed to encourage school personnel to examine the quality of their compensatory basic skills programs with regard to research factors known to be strongly related to school effectiveness. Training in how to conduct the review process, with emphasis on how to gather and analyze data, can be provided by the state education department; however, even without this assistance, participating staff should be able, using this manual, to conduct assessments of programs in their own and/or similar schools. The guide is divided into five sections. The first section orients the user to BSPIP. The next four sections describe the procedures and responsibilities associated with each of the following phases of the process: (1) initiation; (2) preparation for the external study team visit; (3) the external study team visit; and (4) follow-up. Appendixes include a sample visit schedule, summaries of the research used to focus the review, and descriptions of teacher and student behaviors for use in analyzing classroom observations. Twenty figures are included. (AF)

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A GUIDE TO THE BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Saul Cooperman
Commissioner of Education

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Materials in Appendices A, C and D have been adapted from the Chapter I Program Improvement Guide (Research for Better Schools, Inc., December 1983).

The division thanks the basic skills staff of the Montclair, East Orange and Bloomfield school districts for their cooperation in the preliminary piloting of this process.

OVERVIEW OF THE MANUAL

This manual is intended for school staffs wanting to use peer review for improvement of their basic skills program(s). Training in how to conduct the review process, with emphasis on how to gather and analyze data, will be provided by the New Jersey State Department of Education. Even without such assistance, however, participating staff should be able, using this manual, to conduct assessments of programs in their own and/or similar schools.

The guide has five sections and an appendix. The first section orients the user to the Basic Skills Program Improvement Process. The next four sections describe the procedures and responsibilities associated with each phase of the process: Initiation, Preparation for the External Study Team Visit, the External Study Team Visit, and Follow-up. The Appendices contain a sample visit schedule, summaries of the research used to focus the review, and descriptions of teacher and student behaviors for use in analyzing classroom observations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS i

OVERVIEW OF THE MANUAL ii

INTRODUCTION 1

What is BSPIP? 1

How Does It Work? 1

Materials 2

Factors Affecting Achievement 2

Organization of the Review Process 7

PHASE I: INITIATION 11

Overview 13

Responsibilities and Tasks 15

PHASE II: PREPARATION 23

Overview 25

Responsibilities and Tasks 27

Developing the Schedule 29

Reviewing Pre-visit Forms 30

Preparing Local Personnel and External Study Team 43

PHASE III: EXTERNAL STUDY TEAM VISIT 45

Overview 47

Conducting the Entrance Conference 49

Observing School Climate 50

Interviewing Staff, Students and Parents 55

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Page

Observing Classrooms.. 97

Preparing a Draft of the School Report...................... 105

Conducting the Exit Conference............................. 106

Completing the School Report............................... 106

PHASE IV: FOLLOW-UP... 159

Overview.. 161

Reviewing the School Report................................. 163

Locating Resources.. 163

Developing the Basic Skills Program Improvement Plan........ 163

Responsibilities and Tasks................................. 164

APPENDICES... 165

Appendix A - Research Summaries............................ 167

Appendix B - Sample Schedule............................... 223

Appendix C - Teachers' Instructional Behaviors............. 229

Appendix D - Students' Classroom Behaviors................. 231

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1 Research-factor Framework and Year-end Achievement........................ 5

Figure 2 BSPIP Responsibilities and Tasks.................. 9

Figure 3 Checklist of Requirements for BSPIP Participation.............................. 17

Figure 4 Application Form................................ 19

Figure 5 School Information Form.......................... 21

Figure 6 Summary of Basic Skills Achievement Data.......... 31

Figure 7 BSI Teacher Pre-observation Form................. 35

Figure 8 Non-BSI Teacher Pre-observation Form.............. 41

Figure 9 School Climate Observation Form.................. 53

Figures 10-18 Interview Forms:

Figure 10 Superintendent/Central Office Staff.............. 57

Figure 11 Principal/Basic Skills Director.................. 61

Figure 12 Basic Skills Teacher............................ 67

Figure 13 Basic Skills Student, Grades 1-4................. 73

Figure 14 Basic Skills Student, Grades 5-12................ 77

Figure 15 Non-BSI Teacher................................. 83

Figure 16 Non-BSI Student, Grades 1-4..................... 87

Figure 17 Non-BSI Student, Grades 5-12.................... 89

Figure 18 BSI Parent Group Discussion Guide................ 93

Figure 19 Classroom Observation Form....................... 99

Figure 20 School Report Form.............................. 107

INTRODUCTION

What Is BSPIP?

BSPIP is a program improvement opportunity offered to New Jersey school districts by the Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education of the New Jersey State Department of Education. The initials stand for Basic Skills Program Improvement Process, a project designed to encourage school personnel to examine the quality of their compensatory[1] basic skills programs with regard to research factors known to be strongly related to school effectiveness.

The process was developed initially by state-level basic skills staff from Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. During the spring of 1984 the New Jersey State Department of Education piloted it in three New Jersey school districts. The Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education, using the results of the pilot study, revised the materials and adapted the program for statewide use.

All stages of the process, from external review through development of the improvement plan, implementation and follow-up, are designed to be carried out with readily available resources by the participating schools. State Education Agency (SEA) staff provide materials and training for the study teams and a guide to other resources for basic skills program improvement.

How Does It Work?

The program review is conducted by a team of educators from another school district matched for type and size. This team visits the school to identify needed improvements in the basic skills program and to make specific recommendations for strengthening it.

Thirteen characteristics associated in the research literature with effective schools are used to structure observations, interviews and reviews of materials during the site visit. The data gathered in this manner, together with suggestions and a list of resources for program improvement, are synthesized in a school report and presented to the host school at an exit conference. This report becomes the basis for a locally developed self-improvement plan.

The process rests on lessons learned from educational improvement efforts of the past decade. Local educators must determine whether they need to improve and what changes are necessary in order to improve. Participation of local staff in the external review of another school or district, while not an essential component of the process, enhances its value. It reinforces the peer relationship of study team members and hosts, further develops staff members' program evaluation skills, and spurs them to greater efforts in their home schools.

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[1] "Compensatory," as used in this manual, refers to all supplementary basic skills programs, regardless of the source of funding (state, federal, local).

Materials

A number of products have been developed or adapted by the Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education for use by and with participating schools or districts. They include:

- An awareness packet and overhead transparencies to introduce the BSPIP to district decision-makers.
- The BSPIP manual you are reading, A Guide to the Basic Skills Program Improvement Process, designed to enable a school or district to implement the process, either on its own or with technical assistance from SEA staff.
- A supplement, Resources for Basic Skills Program Improvement, to help local district personnel respond to needs identified during the review.

Factors Affecting Achievement

The 13 characteristics used to focus the BSPIP review have been chosen for three reasons. First, each has been operationally defined, measured, and related empirically to some measure of student achievement. Second, evidence shows that schools and classrooms vary significantly with respect to each factor, e.g., students in some schools and classrooms spend considerably more time involved in basic skills learning activities than do students in other schools and classrooms. Third, evidence shows that educators can modify their practices with respect to each factor, e.g., they can manage classrooms and time in ways which increase the amount of time students are engaged in learning activities.

Following are definitions of the "target factor," year-end achievement, and the 13 research factors:

Year-end Achievement. The "target" of all basic skills improvement efforts, this may be defined as the gains made by students in reading, writing and/or mathematics compensatory programs as measured by appropriate achievement tests and recorded in NCEs.

Student-related Factors.

Three interrelated factors have been identified as "good" predictors of year-end gains. They include:

1. **Student Attendance and Engagement.** Students regularly attend school and are actively engaged in learning activities in the targeted area for a significant period of time each day.

2. **Skills Studied.** Students work on skills which are appropriate, given their prior learning and what is measured by year-end achievement tests. Thus, the old proscription, "Don't teach to the test," can be updated to, "Use a test that measures achievement in areas that are important to teach, then gear instruction to it. But first, diagnose."

3. **Daily Success.** Students are more likely to show year-end gains if they experience a moderately high level of success in their daily learning activities. Success may be defined here as the accurate completion of daily assignments, whether such assignments address new skills or review those previously acquired.

Classroom-related Factors.

The student-related factors affecting achievement are influenced, in turn, by what happens in classrooms - what teachers believe and what they do. These factors, too, are interrelated.

4. **Classroom Management.** Teachers manage their classrooms in ways which minimize disruption and maximize the amount of time spent on learning activities in the targeted area or areas.

5. **Teacher Expectations and Related Teacher Behaviors.** Teachers of students who make strong gains in basic skills believe their students to be capable of developing these skills. They believe themselves able to provide a classroom environment and instruction consistent with that belief. They communicate these positive expectations to all students, regardless of family background.

6. **Instruction.** Teachers use appropriate methods and materials, organized to realize specific skills objectives. They also monitor students' progress continuously and provide students with regular feedback.

7. **Parent/Family Involvement.** Teachers, particularly at the elementary school level, communicate and work with parents and other family members to ensure their active support of their children's learning in the targeted areas.

Program, School, and District-related Factors.

Student and teacher-related factors are influenced by the programs, schools, and districts in which they operate:

8. **School Climate.** School managers and staff maintain a secure, orderly, business-like, pleasant environment.

9. **"Basic Skills" Goals and Programs.** District and school leaders communicate clear goals for all students in reading, writing, and/or mathematics and have a well-established and defined program in each of the areas.

10. **Use of Resources.** District, school and program leaders allocate available resources to provide a maximum amount of appropriate instruction to the maximum number of eligible students.

Program Improvement-related Factors.

Structures and procedures for improving program and instructional practices show an ongoing concern with effectiveness that is reflected in student achievement. These structures and procedures include:

11. **Cooperative Teacher Planning for Individual Student Needs.** Teachers develop cooperative plans which describe how they will help individual students progress in reading, writing and/or mathematics skills. They keep each other informed about each student's progress.

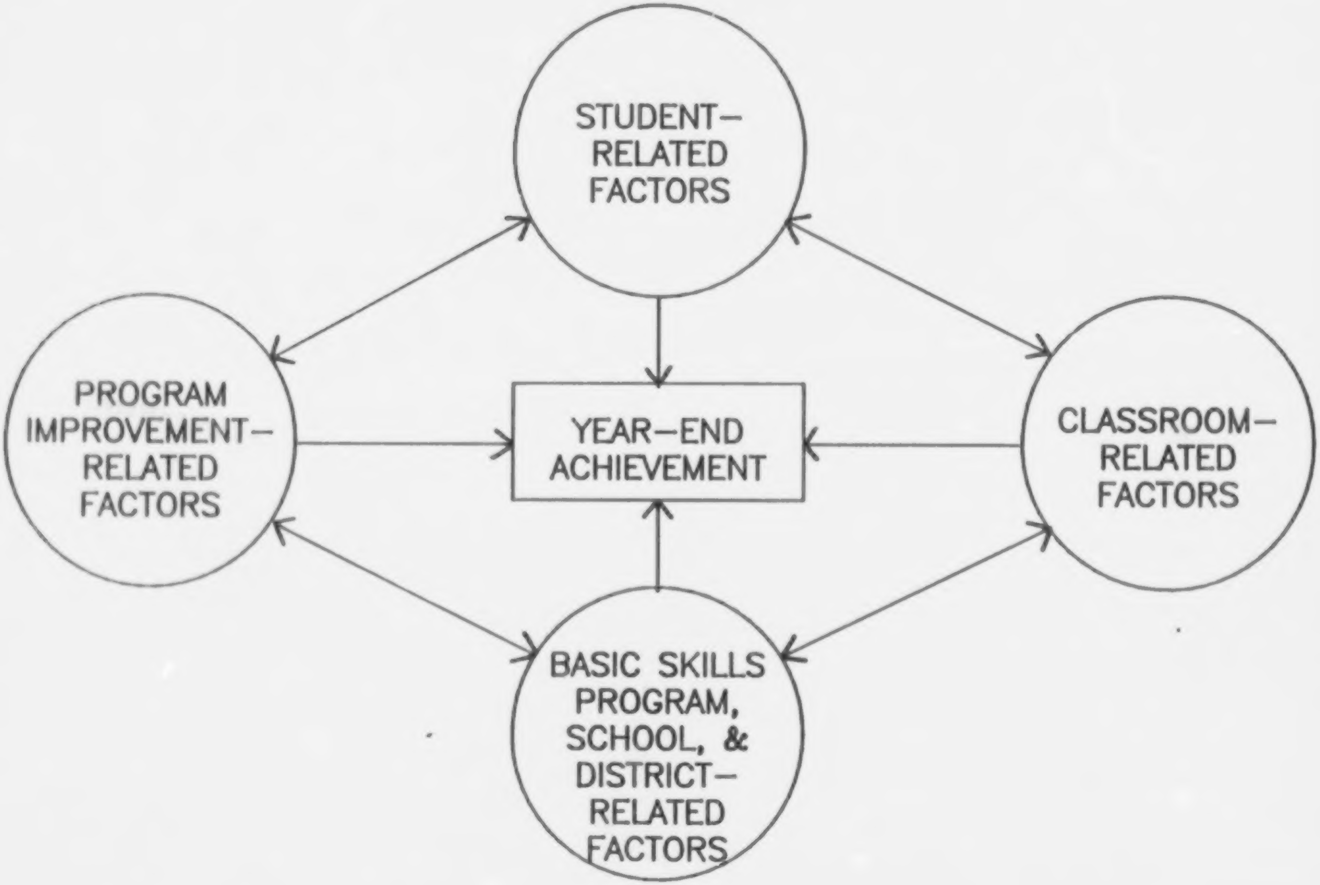
12. **Supervision and Staff Development.** District and school leaders supervise teachers in ways which help them improve their classroom management and instructional effectiveness. They also provide appropriate staff development activities.

13. **Organized Program Improvement Efforts.** District and school leaders organize, direct and manage ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness of basic skills programs.

The interrelationships of these groups of factors and their target, year-end achievement, are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

RESEARCH-FACTOR FRAMEWORK AND YEAR-END ACHIEVEMENT


STUDENT-RELATED FACTORS
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT-RELATED FACTORS
YEAR-END ACHIEVEMENT
CLASSROOM-RELATED FACTORS
BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM, SCHOOL, & DISTRICT-RELATED FACTORS

Organization of the Review Process

The Basic Skills Program Improvement Process is organized into four phases:

Phase I: Initiation.

The Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education invites school districts to apply. District leaders who believe the process will benefit their BSI programs submit applications and School Information Forms. State staff select participating schools or districts from applicants, notify local leaders and assist in the negotiation of necessary arrangements. Each district then forms a team of three to five members for the external review of program(s) in another district. The team includes at least one classroom teacher of BSI students in each subject area to be reviewed (reading, writing, and/or mathematics); the supervisor of compensatory programs in the school or district; and other appropriate personnel, as determined by the district. One member is designated as Local Project Leader. This person coordinates the process and serves as liaison with the External Study Team and SEA staff.

Phase II. Preparation for the External Study Team Visit.

The Local Project Leader and the External Study Team Leader negotiate a schedule and make other necessary arrangements for the visit.

Training for the external study teams is provided by staff from the Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education.

Phase III. External Study Team Visit.

Members of the External Study Team, using the research-based 13-factor framework, interview local students, staff and parents, observe basic skills and developmental classes and school climate, and review materials. They then summarize these observations, identify improvements needed, and prepare a School Report. The School Report contains specific suggestions and resources for program improvement, keyed to the 13-factor structure.

Phase IV. Follow-up.

The school or district decides which improvements it will undertake, then develops and implements a Basic Skills Improvement Plan based on the report. The SEA provides technical assistance, as needed.

Figure 2 highlights the responsibilities and tasks of the local education agency (LEA), the External Study Team, and the state education agency (SEA).

The following sections of this guide include fuller descriptions of these responsibilities and tasks; suggestions, derived from field testing, for successful implementation of the review and follow-up; and sample copies of forms used during each phase of the process.

Figure 2

BSPIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

Process Phase	State Education Agency	Local Education Agency	External Study Team
Phase I Initiation	• Presents Awareness Sessions • Invites districts to participate. • Disseminates BSPIP information and materials	• Reviews requirements and decides whether to apply. • Completes School Information Form. • Appoints an External Study Team and Local Project Leader.	
Phase II Preparation for the External Study Team Visit	• Develops master schedule for Study Team visits and training. • Conducts training.	• Prepares staff for the External Study Team visit. • Coordinates a schedule and arrangements for the External Study Team visit. • Assembles orientation materials and other documents for the External Study Team. • Completes Pre-observation Forms.	• Prepares team members to perform tasks. • Develops a schedule for the visit with the Local Project Leader.

Figure 2 (continued)

BSPIP RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

Process Phase	State Education Agency	Local Education Agency	External Study Team
Phase III External Study Team Visit	• Continues support throughout the visit for the External Study Team and for the LEA. • Disseminates "Resources for Basic Skills Program Improvements."	• Makes staff, facilities, and services available.	• Conducts entrance conference. • Observes classrooms and school. • Interviews personnel. • Prepares a school report for each school visited. • Conducts exit conference.
Phase IV Follow-up	• Provides technical assistance, where feasible. • Compiles descriptions of successful improvement efforts to share with districts. • Accumulates a bank of BSPIP quantitative data, to be shared with districts for use in self-evaluation of basic skills programs.	• Develops a Basic Skills Improvement Plan based on the School Report. • Implements the plan. • Gathers and analyses data about improvements resulting from the process. • Uses process and materials for continuous self-evaluation.	

PHASE I: INITIATION OF THE PROCESS

PHASE I: INITIATION

Overview

Initiation begins when the Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education invites school districts to participate. District decision makers consider what participation would require of them and whether such participation would help to improve reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics programs for their basic skills students.

If district leaders decide to involve one or more schools in the process, they submit the letter of application and a School Information Form. The SEA reviews the applications and matches districts or schools with those having similar needs.

When a district is notified that one of its schools has been selected, district leaders appoint an External Study Team of three to five members from their own staff, designating one member (usually the basic skills program director) as Local Project Leader. This person will fill two roles:

1) Member/leader of the study team visiting another school or district, and

2) Coordinator/liaison for BSPIP in the home district.

After study teams and leaders have been appointed and the SEA notified, state staff, through negotiation with Local Project Leaders, will develop a master schedule for External Study Team visits and pre-visit training.

Following is an outline of the responsibilities and tasks of Phase I.

Responsibilities and Tasks

The SEA:

1. Develops orientation materials and presents awareness sessions for school district decision-makers.

2. Invites districts to nominate one or more schools for review.

3. Selects and notifies participants.

4. Develops a master schedule for visits and for training.

5. Provides each district with information (names, roles, schools, districts) about its visiting team and leader.

6. Assists with preparations for the External Study Team visits.

The LEA:

1. Attends the Awareness Session and considers what will be required of the district before applying for participation.

2. Completes the Application Form and School Information Form.

3. Confirms with state staff the date for the External Study Team visit, after having been notified of selection.

4. Selects a team from its own staff for external review of another school or district's BSI program.

5. Designates one person as team leader. This person, in most cases the school or district BSI director, will also serve as Local Project Leader during the External Study Team visit.

District leaders considering participation in the BSPIP may wish to use the checklist shown in Figure 3, which outlines what is required of a participating school or district. Each of the checklist items is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this guide.

The Letter of Application and the School Information Form to be submitted with it are shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 3

CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS FOR BSPIP PARTICIPATION

1. District staff are committed to the improvement of basic skills achievement in reading, writing/ language arts, and/or mathematics.

2. District staff perceive the process as a useful approach to improving programs for basic skills students.

3. The district will appoint a team of three to five members, who will be made available, as necessary, for external review of the BSI program in a similar school.

4. The district will designate one member of the team as local project leader. This person will have a dual role:

   - To serve as leader of the team providing external review for the program in another school district.

   - To act as coordinator/liaison for the external review of the program in his or her own district.

5. District leaders will provide other staff resources necessary to implement the process.

6. District staff will assemble for the External Study Team the information and documents requested by the External Study Team Leader.

7. District staff will make arrangements needed for the External Study Team to observe school and classrooms, to interview staff, students, and parents, and to review materials.

8. District leaders will communicate the purpose of the visit to other staff members and prepare them for the visit.

9. District leaders will assist the External Study Team by providing duplication services and typing, if necessary.

10. District leaders will provide the SEA with feedback on the visit and information about activities undertaken as a result of the visit.

Figure 4

APPLICATION FORM

District ______________ Code ______________ County ______________ Code ______________

We have reviewed the checklist of requirements for participating districts and would like to be part of the Basic Skills Program Improvement Process.

The number of schools in our district is ______________.

We are requesting an external review of the BSI program in (circle one) Reading, Writing/Language Arts, Mathematics in ______________________________. ______________
(Name of School) (Code)

Attached are (1) a School Information Form; (2) a copy of the school calendar for the academic year _______; and (3) a school master schedule.

Local contact person ______________________________

Title ______________ Telephone ______________

Superintendent's signature ______________________________

Figure 5

SCHOOL INFORMATION FORM

Date ____________________

County ______________________________ Code __________

District ____________________________ Code __________

School ______________________________ Code __________

Purpose:

This form is designed to provide basic descriptive information about a school and its basic skills improvement program. It should be submitted with the application.

Directions:

In reporting total BSI enrollments, use duplicated counts, e.g., a student receiving compensatory instruction in both reading and mathematics should be counted twice.

If answers to any questions differ by grade and subject area, please provide them by grade and subject on the reverse side of the page.

1. Total school enrollment ____
2. Total BSI enrollment ____
   - a. Reading ____
   - b. Writing/Language Arts ____
   - c. Mathematics ____
3. Grade levels in school ____
4. Grade levels in BSI Program
   - a. Reading ____
   - b. Writing/Language Arts ____
   - c. Mathematics ____
5. Number of full-time equivalent teachers in school ____
6. Number of full-time equivalent teachers assigned to BSI program ____

Figure 5 (cont'd.)

SCHOOL INFORMATION FORM

7. Average class size in school _____

8. Average size of BSI class _____

9. The length of a BSI class session in minutes _____

10. A BSI class meets _____ times a week

11. Number of teacher aides in BSI program _____

12. Type of BSI program

_____ out-of-class

_____ in-class

_____ other: (describe)

____

____

____

____

13. (Answer only if answer to #12 is out-of-class)

a. From what classes are BSI students taken? ____________________________________

____

b. Does each BSI session take place at the same time of day? ______________________

____

14. (Answer only if answer to #12 is "in-class")

What are other students doing while BSI students are receiving compensatory instruction?

____

____

PHASE II: PREPARATION

PHASE II: PREPARATION

Overview

During this phase, the Local Project Leader and the External Study Team Leader develop a schedule for the site visit and review the data collection plan and instruments. The Local Project Leader then assembles the necessary information and documents, prepares local students and staff, and coordinates such other arrangements as are necessary to accommodate the visit. The External Study Team Leader, with SEA assistance, sees to it that team members are prepared to carry out their assigned tasks. Following is an outline of these procedures.

Responsibilities and Tasks

The Local Project Leader:

1. Reviews the completed School Information Form (Figure 5).
2. Meets with the leader of the External Study Team before the scheduled visit to:
    - Reaffirm the purpose of the visit;
    - Review data-gathering instruments and the 13-factor structure;
    - Develop a schedule for the observation and interviews;
    - Decide on the documents that will be assembled for review; and
    - Discuss hospitality arrangements.
3. Prepares a packet of materials to be mailed to External Study Team members three weeks before the visit. These will include:
    - The School Information Form and schedule.
    - Orientation materials, e.g., names, location of staff, daily schedule, description of BSI program, travel directions, map of the school building(s), hospitality arrangements.
4. Makes arrangements with local staff for the interviews and classroom observations specified in the visit schedule.
5. Helps local staff, students, and parents to understand the purpose of the visit in the context of the total school program.

The External Study Team Leader:

1. Meets with the Local Project Leader for the purposes described. At this meeting, also advises the Local Project Leader as to what materials should be available for review during the visit.
2. Coordinates hospitality and transportation arrangements for team members.
3. Assembles copies of data-gathering instruments to be used by the team.
4. With the assistance of SEA staff, prepares team members to perform the tasks associated with the visit.
5. Makes arrangements to accommodate the training schedule, e.g., released time, coverage for classes, if necessary.

Developing the Schedule

At least six weeks before the first scheduled visit, the team leader in each participating district will receive: (1) a copy of the master schedule for study team visits and training; (2) information about the team that will be visiting the district (names, roles, home district); and an assignment for external review of the BSI program in another district, together with the School Information Form for each school to be visited in that district.

It is suggested that the Local Project Leader initiate a meeting with the External Study Team Leader as soon as possible after receiving these materials. At least three hours should be allowed for this meeting.

After reaffirming the purpose of the visit and reviewing the School Information Form, the leaders should develop a schedule for the two-day visit.

The following time allotment is suggested for the activities of the External Study Team:

Activity	Time	Participants	Location
Entrance conference, interviews, observations of school and classrooms.	1 day	Entire team	Host site
Review of materials, analysis of data, preparation of rough draft of School Report.	1 day	Entire team	Host site
Exit conference	2 hours	Entire team	Host site
Final draft and processing of School Report.	After-school and released time as needed following resumption of regular school duties.	Entire team	Home site
Meeting with Local Project Leader for presentation of final School Report.	1 hour	Team Leader only	Host site

Following is a list of the activities to be included in the first-day schedule.

- Interviews with:

  The superintendent or his/her designee; appropriate central office staff, e.g., subject-matter supervisors (20 minutes each);

  The principal and basic skills program director (30-40 minutes each);

  Basic skills teachers (30-40 minutes each);

  Basic skills students (3 or 4, selected randomly; 10 minutes each)

  Other teachers (in elementary schools, at least 1 teacher of each grade level reviewed; in departmentalized settings, at least 1 teacher whose developmental classes in the targeted grade levels include BSI students. These should be English or mathematics teachers, depending on the focus of the BSPIP review; 10-20 minutes each.)

  Other students (2 or 3, selected randomly; 10 minutes each)

  Parents of BSI students, as available for informal group interview (40 minutes)

- Observations of:

  Basic skills classes (preferably 2 in each targeted grade and subject area; 20-40 minutes each)

  Developmental classes including BSI students in targeted subject and grade levels (these should be, if possible, the teachers selected for interviews; 20 minutes each)

Time should also be provided during the first day for members to complete forms, adjust schedules, travel between buildings, if necessary, and to break for lunch. Since school climate will be observed continuously by individual members throughout both days of the visit, it is not necessary to set aside a special time for climate observation.

In most cases, all observations and interviews will be scheduled for the first day of the site visit. The second (or last) day should be reserved for study team members to (1) review assembled material; (2) discuss and analyze data; (3) generate specific recommendations for improvement; (4) prepare a draft of the School Report; and (5) present preliminary findings in an exit conference.

A sample schedule for a two-day visit will be found in Appendix B.

Reviewing Pre-visit Forms

The team leaders should also spend some time during this meeting reviewing the forms to be completed before the study team visit.

Achievement Summary

The Summary of Basic Skills Achievement Data (Figure 6) will show the three-year achievement trend for the BSI program in each area to be studied. These trend figures may also be used as pre-test scores for schools or districts wishing to assess the results of program improvement efforts stemming from the External Study Team review. An outline of responsibilities and tasks associated with the follow-up stage of the BSPIP is included in the Phase IV section of this manual.

Figure 6

SUMMARY OF BSI ACHIEVEMENT DATA

Date ______________________ School ____

District ____________________ Code __________________ County ____________________ Code ________

(Circle one) Reading Writing/Language Arts Mathematics

DIRECTIONS

- Complete a separate form for each subject and content area to be reviewed.
- Record pre- and posttest data for the three years immediately preceding the current academic year.
- Use the "Year 3" column for last year's data, the "Year 2" column for the preceding year, etc.
- Include only those students completing both pre- and posttests.

Figure 6 (cont'd.)

SUMMARY OF BSI ACHIEVEMENT DATA

	YEAR 3		YEAR 2		YEAR 1	
Grade Level	Number Tested	Mean NCE Gain	Number Tested	Mean NCE Gain	Number Tested	Mean NCE Gain

Pre-observation Forms

Forms to be completed by BSI and non-BSI teachers before the classroom observations are shown in Figures 7 and 8. The Local Project Leader should provide teachers with a separate form for each class to be observed and assist them in completing the forms, if necessary.

It is important to emphasize that the teachers will not be evaluated. Each class session will be visited by two observers, probably classroom teachers in similar roles. They will be attempting to capture all aspects of the classroom experience in order to provide feedback to the teacher and a "snapshot" for the study team. Data from these classroom observations will be synthesized in the School Report.

The teachers should have the freedom to determine what type of lesson will be observed. They may rewrite their lesson plans as changing circumstances dictate, provided that the revised plans are submitted to the Local Project Leader at least one day before the visit.

Some teachers may wish to provide the observers with more information than the form requests. They should be encouraged to do so. Additional sheets may be attached to the forms, if necessary.

Teachers should be informed that they will have an opportunity to amplify their written comments and to clarify other matters for the observer during their interviews. Each interview will be conducted as soon as possible after the classroom visit by at least one person who visited the teacher's classroom.

Figure 7

BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

Directions:

- One form should be filled out for each class to be observed, regardless of the number of teachers involved.
- The BSI teacher should complete the form with the assistance of the Local Project Leader, who will retain a copy for distribution to the External Study Team on the day of the visit.
- The form, including the lesson plan, may be updated or revised as the teacher wishes, provided that the most recent revision is filed with the Local Project Leader at least one day before the visit.

I. PROGRAM AND ATTENDANCE DATA

School ______________________________ Code __________ District ______________________ Code __________

County ______________________________ Code __________ Teacher ______________________________

Subject Area ________________________ Grade Level(s) ______________________________

Period and/or Time of Class ______________

1. Number of students enrolled in this class: (If the class is multi-graded, list enrollments by grade level.)

____

____

____

2. Setting (circle one): classroom, cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, laboratory, library, other (describe)

____

____

Figure 7 (cont'd.)

BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

3. Number of sessions to date ____________________

4. Of the students in this class, how many have missed 1-5 classes this year? ________ 6-10 classes? ________

More than 10 classes? ________

5. How many times has this class been cancelled this year? ______________

6. What provision is usually made for your students when you are absent? (Describe) ____________________

7. In your opinion, how many of the students in this class may be expected to continue to require basic skills supplementary services beyond this school year? (Estimate by grade level, if applicable.)

Figure 7 (cont'd.)

BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

II. LESSON PLAN

Directions:

- If this is to be a whole-group lesson, describe. List objectives, materials, procedures, and any homework assignments.
- If the class is to receive individualized instruction, describe the plan of operation. List the number of students working together, independently, or with the teacher, together with brief descriptions of the activities in which you expect them to be engaged.
- For either type of plan, describe briefly the context of the class session that is to be observed (its relationship to an ongoing unit or series of lessons and/or activities).
- Attach worksheets, seating chart, if applicable, and any other materials to help the observer(s).

Figure 7 (cont'd.)

BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

III. PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Directions:

- On the line at the left, put on X for each type of communication you have had this year with parents or other family members of the students in this class.
- Estimate the number of times each type of communication has taken place. Record in column 2.
- Of these, how many were initiated by school staff? How many by parents? Record in columns 3 and 4.
- Using the following code, record the letters that represent the topics covered in each type of communication:

Topics Code
  a. Program objectives
  b. Specific assignments
  c. Student achievement
  d. Student behavior
  e. What parents can do to help

1. Type of Communication	2. Number of Times	3. Number Initiated by Staff	4. Number Initiated by Family	5. Topics Included
--- Parent group meeting or workshop				
--- Individual parent-teacher conference				
--- Student-parent-teacher conference				
--- Telephone call				
--- Home visit				
--- Note or letter				

Figure 7 (cont'd.)

BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Figure 7 (cont'd.)

1. Type of Communication	2. Number of Times	3. Number Initiated by Staff	4. Number Initiated by Family	5. Topics Included
--- Report card				
--- Progress report				
--- Newsletter				
--- Flyer				
--- Other				

Figure 8

NON-BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

Directions:

- One form should be filled out for each class to be observed, regardless of the number of teachers involved.
- The teacher should complete the form with the assistance of the Local Project Leader, who will retain a copy for distribution to the External Study Team on the day of the visit.
- The form, including the lesson plan, may be updated or revised as the teacher wishes, provided that the most recent revision is filed with the Local Project Leader at least one day before the visit.

I. PROGRAM AND ATTENDANCE DATA

School ______________________ Code __________ District ______________ Code ______

County ______________________ Code __________ Teacher ______________________

Subject Area ____________________ Grade Level(s) ______________________

Period and/or Time of Class

1. Total number of students enrolled in this class: __________
2. BSI students enrolled in this class: (by grade level) __________
3. Number of sessions to date __________
4. How many of the BSI students in this class have missed 1-5 classes ? ________ 6-10 classes? ________

   More than 10 classes? ________
5. How many times has this class been cancelled this year? __________

Figure 8 (cont'd.)

NON-BSI TEACHER PRE-OBSERVATION FORM

6. What provision is usually made for your students when you are absent? (Describe) ______________________

7. In your opinion, how many of the students in this class will continue to need supplementary basic skills instruction beyond the present school year? (If this is a multi-grade class, estimate by grade level.)

Preparing Local Personnel and External Study Team

After their initial meeting, the Local Project Leader and External Study Team Leader continue with their individual preparations, as follows:

The Local Project Leader

- Communicates purpose and nature of visit to local staff, students and parents, as appropriate.
- Completes scheduling and other arrangements with local staff.
- Assembles orientation materials to be mailed to the External Study Team members three weeks before the scheduled visit.
- Completes the Achievement Summary (Figure 6)
- Meets with BSI and non-BSI teachers to complete one Pre-observation Form (Figures 7 and 8) for each class to be observed. These forms will be made available to the External Study Team on the day of the visit, prior to the classroom observations.

The External Study Team Leader

- Helps study team members develop a shared understanding of their responsibilities and roles. Specifically, the team leader, with the assistance of SEA staff, as necessary, should ensure that team members understand the research-factor framework and are prepared to:

    Observe classrooms and complete the observation forms;

    Conduct interviews;

    Contribute to the team's summary observations regarding each factor; and

    Contribute to the analysis of data and preparation of the School Report for each school visited.

Training

If SEA training will be provided, a schedule for this training will be included with the material sent to team leaders at the time of notification. The External Study Team Leader should contact the SEA to confirm the dates, then proceed with such local arrangements (site, schedule clearance, teacher assignment and released time, equipment, hospitality, etc.) as are necessary to accommodate it.

If training is to be undertaken without the direct assistance of SEA staff, the External Study Team Leader should be able to prepare team members adequately, using this manual as a guide to procedures. Sample forms may be duplicated freely and used as worksheets.

It is suggested that such training include:

- Theoretical orientation (review of research supporting the 13-factor structure)
- Discussion of the relationship to these factors of each of the data-gathering instruments
- Review of each of the forms provided
- Role-playing of interviews
- Simulations of classroom and school climate observations
- Guidance in developing the School Report
- Emphasis on "peer relationship" of study team and local school staff
- Emphasis on importance of follow-up

The next section contains guidelines for the External Study Team visit and forms to be used in conducting interviews and observations and preparing the School Report.

PHASE III: EXTERNAL STUDY TEAM VISIT

PHASE III: EXTERNAL STUDY TEAM VISIT

Overview

The purpose of the External Study Team visit is to provide local staff with the framework and impetus for the development of their own basic skills program improvement plan. Local staff provide the raw data. Colleagues from a similar district use their eyes and ears as outside observers, get the "feel" of the BSI program in its total school context, and provide feedback. It is then up to local staff to decide whether and how to improve.

When the External Study Team members visit a school, they conduct an entrance conference, interview staff, students and parents, observe school climate and classrooms, and review material. After summarizing and analyzing these data, they draft a School Report, including suggestions for improvement. The draft report is presented in an exit conference, concluding the visit. The completed report, delivered to the Local Project Leader no more than two weeks later, becomes the basis of a locally-developed basic skills improvement plan.

Conducting the Entrance Conference

The entrance conference is the first scheduled activity for the External Study Team visit. It is suggested that the superintendent, BSI program director, the local BSPIP team, and other school leaders from the host district be present to meet with the visiting team members. The meeting is conducted by the External Study Team Leader.

The objectives of this meeting are to re-acquaint district and school leaders with the purpose of the visit and to review the schedule, techniques, and instruments that will be used for gathering data. It is appropriate at this time also to invite the local team to present an overview of their school system and its basic skills program.

Time should be reserved at the end of the meeting for revisions to the schedule, if necessary, and for distribution of the BSI teachers' completed pre-observation forms to study team members.

The following outline may be of help to the External Study Team Leader in planning the Entrance Conference:

1. Introduce all those present.

2. Review the following:

   - The purpose and plan for the External Study Team visit.

   - The self-study characteristics of the project. This is not a compliance monitoring. It is peer review, with emphasis on self-study and self-directed program improvement.

   - The district alone will be responsible for deciding what improvement efforts are needed, and how they should be undertaken.

3. Discuss the assumptions underlying the current design of the process:

   - The school district is interested in finding ways to improve achievement of students enrolled in compensatory basic skills programs.

   - Research has identified factors that a district should consider in its efforts to improve the achievement of these students.

   - One of the most direct ways of discovering whether and how basic skills achievement might be improved in a school is to gather information from school staff about these factors.

- A study team made up of colleagues from neighboring districts with similar characteristics and goals can help the district with this task.

4. Review the data-collection instruments and the nature and use of the school report.

5. Invite the host district to present an orientation to the district and its BSI program(s). This should include an overview of:

    - The organizational plan of the district;

    - The types of basic skills programs in reading, writing, and mathematics operating in the district's schools; and

    - The settings used for basic skills instruction in the school(s) to be observed.

6. Review the schedule for the visit, including:

    - Staff to be interviewed;

    - Teachers to be interviewed;

    - Work area assigned for external study team meetings;

    - Transportation arrangements to and from the school site(s); and

    - Luncheon and other hospitality arrangements.

7. Revise the schedule, if necessary.

8. Distribute completed Pre-observation Forms to classroom observers.

Observing School Climate

Observation of school climate will begin from the moment the visitors approach the school property and will continue throughout the visit. Climate reveals itself in many ways - through the appearance of buildings and grounds, the tone and content of casual conversation and written communications, the general demeanor of students and staff and the nature of their interaction.

The School Climate Observation Form is shown in Figure 9. Each study team member is to complete the form by recording data obtained naturally throughout the visit, e.g., while walking from one scheduled location to another, participating in meetings, interviewing staff and students.

Although many features characterize the climate of a school, the following should be particularly noted:

- **Appearance of Building(s) and Grounds:**

  Are they clean, attractive, free of litter and graffiti? Do they show evidence of vandalism and/or neglect?

- **Student-to-Student Interaction**

  How do students treat one another outside of class? Is the student environment generally friendly, warm and accepting, or hostile? Do students engage in frequent fist-fights and name-calling? Would you feel comfortable about having your own child or younger brother or sister in this setting?

- **Teacher-Student Interaction**

  Do teachers and students interact cordially and courteously outside the classroom? Do teachers display positive regard for students in their treatment and discussion of them? Do they label or stereotype? Do they use sarcasm, "put-downs" appropriate praise and compliments? Is criticism offered in a supportive manner?

- **Recognition of Student Achievement**

  Is there evidence that both the process and products of student academic work are sufficiently valued in the school environment? Are they accorded the kind of respect, for example, given to athletic activity, appearance in dramatic or musical productions, or election to student office?

- **Principal's Interaction with Students and Staff**

  Does the principal appear to be visible and accessible during the school day? Does he or she circulate, interacting with both teachers and students? Observers should be sensitive to the tone as well as the content of these interactions.

Figure 9

SCHOOL CLIMATE OBSERVATION FORM

County ________________________ Code __________ School ________________________ Code __________

District ________________________ Code __________ Observer ________________________

Directions:

Record date, time, location, and observations that reflect the general school environment, using the space provided below each category.

1. Appearance of Buildings and Grounds

Date	Time	Location	Brief Description

2. Student-to-Student Interaction

Date	Time	Location	Brief Description

Figure 9 (cont'd.)

SCHOOL CLIMATE OBSERVATION FORM

SCHOOL CLIMATE OBSERVATION FORM

3. Teacher-student Interaction

Date	Time	Location	Brief Description

4. Recognition of Student Achievement

Date	Time	Location	Brief Description

5. Principal's Interaction with Students and Staff

Date	Time	Location	Brief Description

Interviewing Staff, Students and Parents

The major purpose of the interviews is to develop a sense of how the BSI program is perceived by the people in the school environment. The discovery of perceptions, especially when they have commonalities, is a powerful tool for identifying needed changes - one of which may even be to improve the image of the program in its own school or district.

The interviews are also a way to "flesh out" quantitative data by tapping the knowledge of those whose voices, in the press of daily school business, may not have been heard sufficiently or with enough clarity by peers and colleagues. Although the focus is on students and staff, the Study Team should attempt as well to solicit some input from parents of students in the program.

Nine forms are provided to structure the interviews: the Superintendent/Central Office Staff Interview Form; the Basic Skills Director/Principal Interview Form; the Basic Skills Teacher Interview Form; the Basic Skills Student Interview Form; and forms for interviewing other students, teachers, and a parent group.

The following guidelines should help to elicit valuable responses. Team members should:

- Present themselves as peers, where appropriate.
- Explain their purpose, the use to be made of the information, and how long the interview will take.
- Promise confidentiality, to the extent possible.
- Explain that the interviewer will be taking notes as they talk.

The questions on the forms are designed to generate informal, "top-of-the-head" responses that will exemplify, in a general way, the subject's perceptions of the BSI program in the school or district. These perceptions may or may not be accurate, but it is important that interviewers accept all answers non-judgmentally. They should strive to put their subjects at ease and to conduct the interview in an informal, conversational manner, pausing only long enough to jot down notes (which may be expanded and coded later) in the space following each question. If the subject seems not to know or chooses not to give the answer to a question, the interviewer should go on to the next one, returning non-aggressively at a later point to previously unanswered questions. Any question answered inadequately or not at all on the second try should be dropped for the remainder of the interview.

Other techniques that interviewers may find helpful include:

- Elaborating ("Could you be a little more specific?" "Could you give me an example?" or "How does that translate into practice?")
- Perception-checking ("Let me try that in my own words to see if I understand you correctly. What you seem to be saying is ...")
- Refocusing ("We seem to have strayed from our original question...What I was interested in learning was...)
- Closure ("I think I understand that point; I wonder if we could now talk about...)

Figures 10-18 include forms to be used in interviewing district and school leaders, staff members, students and a group of parents of BSI students.

Figure 10

SUPERINTENDENT/CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF INTERVIEW FORM

District ______________________ Code ________ County ______________________ Code ________

School ______________________ Code ________ Name ______________________ Date ________

Title ______________________________ Interviewer: ______________________________

Purpose: To gather information about the indicated factors, as perceived by district leaders.

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each person interviewed.
- The Superintendent or a designee will have provided before the interview a written description of the BSI program as it operates in the district school(s). The description will show how the BSI program relates to developmental programs in the same skills. During the first part of the interview, ask for clarification and/or elaboration of any parts of the description that require it.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the subject's response.
- If the subject does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

Figure 10 (cont'd.)

SUPERINTENDENT/CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF
INTERVIEW FORM

1. You have made a considerable commitment of time and resources to this BSPIP review. What do you hope will be the major outcome? (Factors 5, 13)

2. What do you see as the goals of your district's BSI program? (Factor 9)

3. How have these goals been communicated to staff? (Factor 9)

To students? (Factor 5) ____________________

To parents? (Factor 7) ____________________

Figure 10 (cont'd.)

SUPERINTENDENT/CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF INTERVIEW FORM

4. **Has your district done anything recently to upgrade the BSI program(s)?** If the answer is yes, ask, **Would you describe that effort? Was it district-wide or school-based, for example? Why?** (Factors 13, 10)

5. **How do you ensure a satisfactory level of teacher performance?** (Factors 4, 5, 6, 7)

6. **What is your district doing to address the requirement that students pass the HSPT?** (Factor 9)

7. **What, in your view, is the greatest strength of your district's BSI program?** (All factors)

Figure 10 (cont'd.)

SUPERINTENDENT/CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF INTERVIEW FORM

8. How do you think it could be improved? (All factors)

10:4

Figure 11

PRINCIPAL/BASIC SKILLS DIRECTOR INTERVIEW FORM

District ______________________ Code ________ County ______________________ Code ________

School ______________________ Code ________ Name ______________________ Date ________

Title ______________________________ Interviewer: ______________________________

Purpose: To gather information about all factors, as perceived by local school managers.

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each person interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the subject's response.
- If the subject does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

Figure 11 (cont'd.)

PRINCIPAL/BASIC SKILLS DIRECTOR
INTERVIEW FORM

1. What do you see as the overall goals of your BSI program? Do you have any specific goals for this year? (Factor 9)

2. Are staff members aware of these goals? (Factor 9)

   How do you know?

3. Your district has committed time and resources to this BSPIP review. What do you anticipate the primary outcome will be? (Factors 5, 13)

4. (All parts of this question relate to Factor 7) How do you report student achievement to parents?

   Is there a place on the regular report card for BSI classes?

   What grading system is used, and why?

Figure 11 (cont'd.)

PRINCIPAL/BASIC SKILLS DIRECTOR INTERVIEW FORM

How often do report cards go home? ______________________________

____

What other communications with parents take place on a regular basis? ______________________________

____

5. **How do you ensure that BSI and developmental teachers communicate about and plan for individual students?** (Factors 10 and 11)

____

____

____

6. **What kind of supervision is provided for teachers? Give examples.** (Factor 12)

____

____

____

7. **Have you done anything recently to upgrade your BSI program? Please describe.** (Factor 10)

____

____

____

Figure 11 (cont'd.)

PRINCIPAL/BASIC SKILLS DIRECTOR
INTERVIEW FORM

If answer does not include anything about staff development, probe with, **Did these efforts include any in-service training or other staff development activities?** (Factor 12) Ask for examples.

8. **How are you and your staff addressing the HSPT requirement with basic skills teachers and students?** (Factors 2, 6, 10)

9. **Are you satisfied with the level of parent/family support for your program?** (Factor 7)

10 **Do you get any complaints about the program?** (All factors)

Give examples.

Figure 11 (cont'd.)

PRINCIPAL/BASIC SKILLS DIRECTOR INTERVIEW FORM

What do you hear, generally, from BSI students about the program? (Factor 3)

From parents? (Factor 3)

From BSI Teachers? (Factor 5)

From non-BSI Teachers? (Factor 8)

From other students? (Factor 8)

11. In what ways are you most satisfied with the present program? (Factor 9)

12. How would you improve the program if you could? (Factor 9)

11:5

Figure 12

BASIC SKILLS TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

District ______________________ Code ________ School ______________________ Code ________

County ______________________ Code ________ Teacher ______________________ Code ________

Grade(s) ______________________ Basic Skills Area(s) ______________________

Interviewer: ______________________

Purpose: To collect information about all factors, as perceived by teachers in the BSI program.

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each person interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the subject's response.
- If the subject does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

Figure 12 (cont'd.)

BASIC SKILLS TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

1. **I'd like to share with you some of our observations during your class session. This is in no sense an evaluation of you. All the classroom observations will be merged in a single summary for the School Report. This is just descriptive feedback.** (The interviewer may read aloud observation notes at this point.) **Is there anything you think should be added?** (If necessary, interviewer will ask, **Could you clarify one or two points for me?**) Interviewer will also ask for clarification of any aspect of the Pre-observation Form at this time. (Factors 1-6)

2. How do you and the students' developmental teachers plan together for individual student progress? Where, when and how do you meet, for example? What are some outcomes of these meetings? (Factor 11)

3. What do you see as the major goals of the BSI program? (Factor 9)

Are these goals shared by your colleagues?

By district and school leaders?

Figure 12 (cont'd.)

BASIC SKILLS TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

How do you know? ____________________

____

4. Could you give an example of one of your BSI successes? (Factor 3)

____

____

____

How do you account for it? (Factor 5)

____

____

____

Now try to recall a time when you didn't succeed. Describe the nature of the student's difficulties, your attempts to resolve them, and the reason for your lack of success. (Factor 5)

____

____

____

5. What have you done to inform students and parents about the HSPT requirement? (Factors 5, 6, 7)

____

____

____

Figure 12 (cont'd.)

BASIC SKILLS TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

6. **Have you changed your instruction in any way because of the upcoming HSPT?** (Factors 2, 5, 6)

7. **How do you communicate with students about their progress?** Ask for examples. (Factors 3-6)

With parents about their children's progress? (Factor 7)

8. **Is the BSI program working effectively for you so far this year?** (All factors)

Figure 12 (cont'd.)

BASIC SKILLS TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

9. **What, in your view, is the most outstanding aspect of your school's BSI program in** (target area) ? (All factors) ____________________

____

Why or why not? ____________________

____

10. **How do you think it could be improved?** (All factors)

____

____

____

____

____

89

90

Figure 13

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 1-4)

Date ______________________

District ____________________ Code ________ County ____________________ Code ________

School ______________ Code ________ Student's Name ______________ Student's Grade ___ Code ________

Student's Developmental Teacher ____________________ Period (s) ______________ Room Number ________

Student's BSI Teacher ____________________ Period ______________ Room Number ________

Interviewer: ____

Purpose: To obtain students' perceptions of their daily success, (Factor 3) of teachers' expectations (Factor 5); and of the relationship of the program to their work in developmental classes (Factor 9).

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each student interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the student's response.
- If the student does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

Figure 13 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 1-4)

Your teacher told me you would do a good job of answering some questions about the extra help you are getting in ___(Subject)___, so I'm going to ask you some questions. Okay?

1. Do you like the class? What do you like (or not like) about it? (Factor 3)

2. Are you learning a lot in this class? (Factors 3, 6)

   How do you know? ____

3. Does your teacher think you are learning a lot? (Factor 5)

   How do you know? ____

4. Does your teacher think other children in the class can learn as well as you? (Factor 5)

   Better than you? ____

   Not as well as you? ____

   How do you know? ____

Figure 13 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 1-4)

5. What do you do in the class? (Factor 3)

6. Is your family glad you're getting extra help? (Factor 7)

How do you know?

7. Do your friends ever ask you about the class? (Factor 8)

What do they say?

What do you tell them?

13:3

Figure 13 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 1-4)

8. **If you could do just one thing to make the class better, what would it be?** (Factor 9)

If student cannot think of anything, say, **Or maybe it's just about right as it is. Is it?**

Figure 14

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

Date ______________________

District ___________________________ Code ________ County ________________________ Code ________

School ______________ Code ________ Student's Name ______________ Student's Grade ___ Code ________

Student's Developmental Teacher _______________________ Period (s) _______________ Room Number ________

Student's BSI Teacher ______________________________ Period ___________________ Room Number ________

Interviewer: ____

Purpose: To obtain students' perceptions of their daily success, (Factor 3) of staff and teachers' expectations (Factor 5); and of the relationship of the program to their work in developmental classes (Factor 9).

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each student interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the student's response.
- If the student does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

Figure 14 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

We were invited here today to take a look at the Basic Skills Improvement Program in this school. We want to find out whether the program is doing a good job for you and how, if at all, it can be improved. We would like to ask you a few questions. All your replies will be confidential.

1. How did you get into the BSI class? (Factor 9)

2. How will it be decided that you are ready to leave it? (Factor 9)

3. What do you see as the chief reason for your being in the class (or classes)? Are you succeeding? (Factors 1-6)

   Why? (or Why not?) ______

4. Have you been attending the class (or classes) regularly this year? (Factor 1)

Figure 14 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

5. How do you feel about the class? (Factor 3)

   Why? ____

   What do you like best about it? ______________________________

   ____

   What do you like least about it? ______________________________

6. Do you think your teacher believes you are going to do well this year? (Factor 5)

   ____

   How do you know? ______________________________________

   ____

7. If you don't do well, what do you think will be the reason? (Factors 3, 5, 6)

   ____

   Whose fault will that be? __________________________________

   ____

8. This will not be an easy question to answer, but I want you to think hard and try. When you are in your regular class in the subject, do you ever have the feeling that you are doing better because of the BSI class? (Factor 3)

   ____

   Can you give some examples of when you felt this way? ____________________

   ____

   ____

Figure 14 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

9. What grades are you getting in your regular class in this subject? (Or, these subjects?) (Factors 3, 11)

10. What grades are you getting in the BSI class (or classes)? (Factor 3)

11. Do your regular teachers ever talk to you about the BSI classes? (Factors 8, 9, 11)

What do they say? ______________________________

12. Do your parents talk to you about the BSI classes? (Factor 7)

What do they say? ______________________________

13. Does the principal want you to do well in your BSI class? (Factors 8, 9, 12)

How do you know? ______________________________

Figure 14 (cont'd.)

BSI STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

14. **If you could do just one thing to make the class better, what would it be?**

15. If student cannot think of anything, say, **Or, maybe it's just about right as it is. Is it?**

Figure 15

NON-BSI TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

District ______________________ Code __________ County ______________________ Code __________

School ______________________ Code __________ Name ______________________ Date __________

Interviewer: ____

Purpose: To learn how the BSI program is perceived by teachers other than those directly involved.

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each teacher interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the subject's response.
- If the subject does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

106

107

NON-BSI TEACHER
INTERVIEW FORM

1. In lessons such as the one we observed and in less visible ways, I'm sure you are providing for the needs of the BSI students in the class. Tell me how you do that. (Factor 3)

____

2. What do you see as the chief goal of the BSI program? (Factor 9)

____

3. Is the program succeeding, in your view? (All factors)

____

Why? (or Why not?) ____________________

4. Can you give an example of an individual student who was helped to do better in your class as a result of the work in the BSI class? (Factors 5, 9, 11)

____

Figure 15 (cont'd.)

NON-BSI TEACHER
INTERVIEW FORM

5. **When and where do you get together with BSI teachers to plan for individual students?** (Factor 11)

Does the planning pay off?

How? (Ask for examples.)

6. **Has your instruction changed in any way in response to the new High School Proficiency Test?** (HSPT) (Factors 2, 5, 6, 9, 13)

- If answer is yes, ask, **What are you doing differently?**

7. **Have you informed students and parents about the HSPT?** (Factors 7, 9)

How?

8. **What specific suggestions do you have for making the BSI program more effective?** (All factors)

Figure 16

NON-BSI STUDENT
INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 1-4)

District ________	Code ____	County ________		Code ____	
School ________	Code ____	Interviewer ________			
Grade level of student ________		Student's name ________		Date ____	

Purpose: To learn how the BSI program is perceived by students other than those directly involved.

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each student interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines following each question to jot down notes during the subject's response.
- If the subject does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code notes as soon as possible after the session.

Figure 16 (cont'd.)

NON-BSI STUDENT
INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 1-4)

The interviewer should begin with: **We were invited here today to see what a good school you have. Your teacher said you would answer some questions for us about school. Is that all right with you? May I ask you a few questions about school?** (If answer is yes, proceed.)

1. **I've heard that some children in your class are getting extra help in** (subject area). **Is that true?** (Factor 8)

   ____

   How do you know? ______________________________

   ____

2. **Why are they getting extra help?** (Factor 8)

   ____

   Is it good for them? ______________________________

   How do you know? ______________________________

   ____

3. **Would you like to be in one of those extra-help classes?** (Factor 8)

   ____

   Why? (or **Why not?**) ______________________________

   ____

Figure 17

NON-BSI STUDENT
INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

District ________________ Code __________ County ____________________________ Code ____________

School ________________ Code __________ Name ______________________________ Date ____________

Title _________________________________ Interviewer: ____

Purpose: To learn how the BSI program is perceived by students other than those directly involved.

Directions:

- Complete a separate form for each student interviewed.
- Ask all questions in a conversational manner.
- Use the lines before each question to jot down notes during the subject's response.
- If the subject does not respond easily, move on to the next question and return to the unanswered question at a later point in the session. If the question remains unanswered on the second try, drop it for the remainder of the interview.
- Expand and code all notes as soon as possible after the session.

116

117

Figure 17 (cont'd.)

NON-BSI STUDENT
INTERVIEW FORM (Grades 5-12)

The interviewers should begin with:

We were invited here today to take a look at the Basic Skills Improvement Program in this school. We want to find out whether the program is doing a good job for the students in it and how, if at all, it can be improved. So we're going to ask you a few questions. All your replies will be confidential.

1. You probably know that the school has some classes in (____________________) for students who need extra help. What do you know about those classes? (Factor 8)

2. Do you have friends in those classes? If answer is yes, ask, Do you think the class is helping your friends? How do you know? (Factor 8)

   How do you know?

3. Would you like to be in one of those classes? (Factor 8)

   Why? (or Why not?)

Figure 17 (cont'd.)

NON-BSI STUDENT
INTERVIEW FORM (grades 5-12, 10 minutes)

4. How do you think most of the other students feel about the BSI classes? (Factor 8)

How do you know?

Have you any idea what the other teachers think about the BSI classes? (Factors 5, 8)

How can you tell?

5. If you have some suggestions about how the basic skills classes could be improved, we'd like to hear them. (Factor 9)

Figure 18

BSI PARENT GROUP* DISCUSSION GUIDE

District ______________________ Code ______________________

School ______________________ Code ______________________

County ______________________ Date ______________________

No. of Parents Present ______________________ Date ______________________

Purpose: To learn how the BSI program is perceived by parents of students in the program.

- All members of the External Study Team should be present. The team leader will open the meeting and lead the discussion, with other members entering in to clarify, restate or probe. Each team member should use a separate form to record answers, striving to capture the exact words of parents. Answers may be coded and summarized later.

- It is suggested that the first part of this meeting begin informally, over coffee or other refreshments. After parents and staff members have chatted awhile, the meeting may be called to order. The External Study Team Leader should introduce members of the team to parents, then begin, as follows:

  The superintendent and principal have invited us here to study the Basic Skills Improvement program to see how it works and whether it is doing the best job it can possibly do for your children. We are a team from the ______________ School District. When we are finished here and go back to our own school(s), a team from another school will come to visit us. In this way, we can all help each other improve. We hope you won't mind answering a few questions for us. We would also like to hear anything else you have to say about the Basic Skills Improvement Program in this school.

*If you are unable to gather a group of parents, or prefer to interview parents separately, this form may also be used for individual interviews.

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Figure 18 (cont'd)

BSI PARENT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

The team leader will then open the discussion, structuring it with the following questions:

1. How do you feel about the BSI program? Do you like it or not like it? (Factor 7) Why?

2. Is the program doing for your child what you think it should? If so, what is best about it? If not, what do you think it should be doing that it isn't? (All Factors)

3. Have you noticed any improvements in your child's approach to schoolwork since he or she began in the program? (If answer is yes, ask for examples.) (Factors 3, 6, 9)

Figure 18 (cont'd)

BSI PARENT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4. What does your child say about basic skills classes? For example, does he or she seem to feel they are helpful and interesting, or boring and a waste of time? (Factor 3)

5. Does your child understand why he or she is in the basic skills class? (Factor 9)

6. Have you had any communication from the school staff this year? (Probe for type, content, tone and success of these communications.) (Factor 7)

Figure 18 (cont'd)

BSI PARENT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

7. **Have you written or called the school this year? About what?**
(Probe for satisfactory/unsatisfactory resolution of problem.) (Factor 7)

8. **How would you make this program better if you could?** (All Factors)

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Observing Classrooms

It is desirable to aim for quality rather than quantity in conducting the classroom observations. Two or more team members, observing the same classroom for 20 minutes, for example, may provide more reliable data than could be obtained by a single observer in twice the amount of time. With this in mind, the study team leader should limit the number of classroom visits to those that can be accommodated by more than one observer at the same time. If a full 40-minute visit cannot be scheduled, the observation should continue for at least 20 minutes and should include either the first or last 20 minutes of a class period.

The observations should yield direct information about Factors 1-6. Together they add up to another dimension of school climate, that of individual classrooms.

Indirect information about Factors 7-13, although not the focus of classroom observation, may also be yielded at this time and should be coded as such on the observation forms.

Lists of teachers' instructional and students' classroom behaviors will be found in Appendices C and D. It is recommended that the observers review these lists before visiting classrooms. The form (Figure 19) is designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative data.

It is suggested that one observer use Part I of the form for a rapid narrative summary of everything that can be observed from the first minute of class to the time of dismissal. This observer will attempt to record the exact words spoken by the teacher (T) and any student speakers (S); as well as the physical setting (seating arrangement, bulletin boards, general appearance of room, etc.); distractions, the handling of disruptions; and the management of procedural details such as attendance taking, record-keeping, and distribution of materials.

The second observer, using Part II of the form, will record student engagement. By the latter is meant the number of students, at selected intervals, actually engaged in work, in listening to content-related instruction, or participating in group discussion (either speaking or actively listening). Student behavior should be coded as either E (engaged), T (in transition), or O (off-task).

As soon as possible after the classroom visit, the observers should meet to code their forms and reach consensus on what they have observed. They should read and expand the narrative summary, identify teachers' instructional behaviors, and code them with the first letter of each word that applies, as follows:

Management
Discipline
Instruction

Management refers to daily routine classroom activities or preparatory, transitional activities, such as distributing materials, taking attendance, etc.

Discipline refers, in general, to any remark or activity having to do with changing a student's behavior.

Instruction refers to all activities having to do with the content of the lesson or skills area. If the teacher, instead of talking, is observing and/or monitoring students as they read or write, this should be considered an instructional activity.

After teacher behaviors have been assigned one of the three codes (M, D or I), the observers should re-read the summary to make inferences about teacher expectations (Ex) and students' experience of daily success (S) and code them accordingly. Although any teacher behavior may relate to these two factors, two in particular should be noted: providing feedback (F) and reinforcing (R). These behaviors are defined in Appendix C.

Figure 19

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Part I. Narrative Summary

School ______________________ Code ________ District ______________ Code ________

County ______________________ Code ____

Period ______________________ Time Observed from ________ ________

Teacher _____________ Observer ____

No. of students enrolled _______________________ No. of students present ______________

Purpose: To develop a "script-tape" of the class session.

Directions:

- Writing as rapidly as possible, record in narrative form everything you observe in the classroom. Record activities and dialogue in the order in which they occur. To save time, use abbreviations, e.g., T for teacher and S for student, and sentence fragments. Notes should be expanded and coded as soon as possible after the observation.

- Use the reverse side of this page and additional sheets, if necessary. Number pages consecutively and include teacher's name, date, and observer's name on each extra page.

- You will notice that the space allotted to your narrative summary has been divided into three parts.

  Although you will write a continuous narrative, you are asked to confine your description of the events and dialogue that occur during the first ten minutes to the space above the first bold line.

  The remaining two spaces are to be used in sequence, so that the events and dialogue of the last ten minutes will appear below the last bold line.

Figure 19 (cont'd)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Part I Narrative Summary

First
10
Minutes

133

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Part II. Student Engagement

School ______________________ Code __________ District ________________ Code ________

County ______________________ Code ______________________________________

Period ______________________ Time Observed from __________ __________

Teacher ______________ Observer ______________________________________

No. of students enrolled ______________________ No. of students present ______________

Purposes: 1. To tally instances of on-task, off-task and transitional student behavior.

2. To calculate engagement, transitional and off-task rates.

Directions:

- Review descriptions of student behavior in Appendix C of the BSPIP guide.
- For each 2-minute interval during the observation period, scan the classroom and tally instances of Engaged (E), Transitional (T) and Off-task (O) student behavior.
- Calculate Engagement Rate as shown in the example below:

a. Add the numbers of students engaged during each interval observed.

Interval	No. of Students Engaged
1st 2 min.	5
2nd 2 min.	20
3rd 2 min.	24
4th 2 min.	18
5th 2 min.	16
6th 2 min.	23
7th 2 min.	8
8th 2 min.	17
9th 2 min.	21
10th 2 min.	3
TOTAL	155

Figure 19 (cont'd.)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

b. Divide total number engaged by the number of intervals observed to arrive at average number engaged.

c. Divide the number engaged by the number enrolled to arrive at the engagement rate. The example below assumes an enrollment of 25:

$$15.5 \quad 25 = .62$$

The engagement rate for this class is 62%.

d. Calculate transitional and off-task rates in the same manner.

Figure 19 (cont'd.)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Part II. Student Engagement

2-Minute Intervals From _____ to _____	Engaged	In Transition	Off-Task
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			

Figure 19 (cont'd.)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

Part II. Student Engagement

2-Minute Intervals From _____ to _____	Engaged	In Transition	Off-Task
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____
	Rate _____	Rate _____	Rate _____

Preparing a Draft of the School Report

The study team should use the second day of the visit to summarize data, analyze findings, and prepare the first draft of a report for each school visited.

As team members discuss their data, they should attempt to:

- Identify areas of the program where realignment or refocusing may be needed.
- Locate blocked or faulty communication channels.
- Use the 13 research factors as a set of lenses through which the same data can be viewed and re-viewed. While certain questions on the BSI Teacher's Pre-Observation Form are intended to tap the teacher's expectations, for example, these expectations may also be inferred from remarks captured on the interview form, or in the narrative summary of the observed classroom.

The School Report form is shown in Figure 20. It is designed to help the External Study Team organize data gathered during the course of the visit and present a coherent summary of their findings and recommendations.

The format calls for the following sequence of tasks:

1. Summarize school and program information.
2. Describe the conduct of the visit.
3. Summarize data.
4. Analyze data, using each of the 13 research factors.
5. Report findings.
6. Recommend specific improvements.
7. Suggest resources.

Following is a suggested plan for sub-task assignments:

Tasks	Assignment
1	Team Leader
2	Team Leader
3:	
School Climate Data	1 member
Interview Data	1 member
Classroom Observation Data	1 member
4-7 ______________	Entire team

Conducting the Exit Conference

An exit conference with the Local Project Leader and other participants chosen by the LEA should be held at the conclusion of the visit.

The meeting should include:

1. A brief review of the nature of the project and summary of data-gathering activities.

2. An oral summary of preliminary findings. Evidence supporting some factors may require more time for consideration than was available during the site visit. In such cases the team should omit those factors from the oral summary and explain that they will be included in the final report.

3. An oral summary of preliminary recommendations and suggested resources.

Completing the School Report

Following the site visit, team members will return to their home district to resume their regular duties. They will use released and/or after-school time and support services from their own district to complete the final draft and typing of the School Report. Four copies of the report should be prepared, and distributed as follows:

1 copy delivered to the local Superintendent of Schools

1 copy delivered to the Local Project Leader

1 copy to be retained, together with all supporting data, by the External Study Team Leader, for at least three years

1 copy mailed to:

Dr. Sylvia M. Roberts, Director
Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education
New Jersey Department of Education
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

The next section of this manual will present guidelines to be used by the LEA in developing an improvement plan based on the study team's recommendations.

Figure 20

District ____________ Code ____________ County ____________ Code ____________

School ____________ Code ____________

BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

SCHOOL REPORT

Basic Skills Area(s) Reviewed:

____________ ____________

____________ ____________

Date of Visit: ____________

External Study Team:

District ____________ Code ____________

County ____________ Code ____________

Name Title School Telephone

Leader: ____________

____

____

____

____

Local Project Leader:

Name Title

____________ ____________

School Telephone ____________

144

145

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Part I. Summary Description of School and Basic Skills Program

Directions:

- Review the School Information Form and other school and program documents provided by the Local Project Leader.

- Synthesize the information into a brief narrative summary, including the following:

    Overview of the school (size, grade levels, organizational structure, number of schools in district, staff);

    Type of basic skills improvement program offered in this school ("out-of-class,: in-class, etc.);

    Number of students participating in the present program, percentage of total school enrollment; percentage of each grade, by skills area (duplicate counts);

    Average class size, by skills area; and

    Staffing (number of teachers, aides, and support personnel assigned full or part-time to the BSI program areas targeted for BSPIP review.

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part II. Conduct of the External Study Team Visit: Worksheet

Directions:

- Use this section to organize data, as indicated below.
- When Part B is completed, the worksheet should be retained by the External Study Team Leader, together with other raw data and notes from the visit. It should not be included with the School Report.

A. ENTRANCE CONFERENCE

Date and Time ____________

Location ____________

Participants	
Numbers	Roles

B. OBSERVATION

School Climate

Number of team members submitting completed forms ____________

BSI Classrooms:

		Grade level(s)
Total number of classrooms visited	______	______
Reading	______	______
Writing/Language	______	______
Mathematics	______	______

Developmental Classrooms:

		Grade level(s)
Total number of classrooms visited	______	______
English	______	______
Mathematics	______	______
Self-contained Elementary	______	______

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

C. INTERVIEWS

Superintendent/Central Office Staff:

Names	Titles

Building-level Administrative/Supervisory Staff:

Names	Titles

BSI Teachers:

Names	BSI Assignment(s)	Grade Levels

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Non-BSI Teachers	Assignments (Check all that apply)			
Names	English	Mathematics	Self-contained	Grade Level

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

C: INTERVIEWS (cont'd)

BSI Students:

	Name	Grade Level	BSI Area (Check all that apply)		
			Reading	Writing/Language Arts	Mathematics
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

C: INTERVIEWS (cont'd)

Non-BSI Students

Non-BSI Class (check all that apply)

Name	Grade Level	Departmentalized English	Departmentalized Mathematics	Self-contained Classroom:		
				Reading	Writing/L.A.	Mathematics

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

BSI Parent Group Discussion

1. Description of Meeting:

   a. Setting ____________________

   b. Time from: ______ to: ______

   c. How were parents invited? (describe briefly ____________________

   d. Number of parents contacted __________

   e. Number of acceptances ______________

   f. Indicate reasons for non-attendance, if known. ____________________

2. Names of Parents Attending This Meeting — Child(ren) in BSI Grade(s)

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

BSI Parent Group Discussion (cont'd)

Names of Parents Attending this Meeting   Child(ren) in BSI Grade(s)

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part II. Conduct of the External Study Team Visit: Summary of Activities

Directions:

Using the information on the worksheet, write a brief narrative summary of the data-gathering activities conducted during the visit. Include the numbers of district, school and program leaders, teachers, students and parents interviewed, but omit names. Findings will be included in a later section of the report.

Summary of Activities:

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part II. Summary of Activities: (cont'd)

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part III. Data Summaries

A. Summary of Climate Observations

- Collect School Climate Observation forms from all team members.
- Synthesize data into one paragraph for each category, using examples from individual forms to support general statements. Retain individual forms with other raw data.

1. Appearance of Buildings and Grounds

____

____

____

____

____

____

2. Student-to-student Interaction

____

____

____

____

____

____

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part III. Data Summaries (cont'd)

3. Teacher-student Interaction

4. Recognition of Student Achievement

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part III. Data Summaries (cont'd)

5. Principal's Interaction with Students and Staff

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

B. Summary of Interviews

- Collect interview forms from all team members
- Summarize perceptions of goals, strengths, and improvements needed in the targeted BSI program, by role, as indicated below. Retain individual forms with other raw data.

1. District Leaders' Perceptions of:

Goals:

Strengths:

Improvements needed:

169

170

Figure 20
SCHOOL REPORT

2. Building-level Administrators' and Program Leaders' Perceptions

Goals: ______________________________

Strengths: ______________________________

Improvements needed: ______________________________

3. BSI Teachers' Perceptions:

Goals: ______________________________

Strengths: ______________________________

Improvements needed: ______________________________

Figure 20
SCHOOL REPORT

4. Non-BSI Teachers' Perceptions:

Goals:

Strengths:

Improvements needed:

5. BSI Students' Perceptions

Why they are in the program

What they like best about the program:

20:17

Figure 20
SCHOOL REPORT

What they like least about the program:

6. Non-BSI Students' Perceptions

Awareness of purpose of program:

Attitudes toward students in the program:

7. BSI Parents' Perceptions

Do they think their children are benefiting from the program?

Figure 20
SCHOOL REPORT

Are they satisfied with parent-school communication?
(e.g., type, frequency, content, tone)

How do parents think the program could be improved?

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

C. Summary of Classroom Observations

Directions:

- Collect forms from all team members.
- Add engagement rates from all classes observed and divide by number of classes observed.
- Scan coded narrative observations for answers to items 5, 6 and 7.

1. Mean Engagement Rate

All Classes: ____________________

Developmental Classes: ____________

BSI Classes: ____________________

2. Mean Transitional Rate

All Classes: ____________________

Developmental Classes: __________

BSI Classes: ____________________

3. Mean "Off-task" Rate

All classes: ____________________

Developmental Classes: ____________

BSI Classes: ____________________

4. Mean Attendance Rate

All classes: ____________________

Developmental Classes: __________

BSI Classes: ____________________

5. During what period of the day was engagement rate highest? All __________ Developmental __________ BSI ____

During what period of the day was engagement rate lowest? All __________ Developmental __________ BSI ____

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

6. Engagement rate during first ten minutes

All Classes ______________ Developmental Classes ______________ BSI Classes ______________

Engagement rate during last ten minutes

All Classes ______________ Developmental Classes ______________ BSI Classes ______________

Engagement rate during middle portion

All Classes ______________ Developmental Classes ______________ BSI Classes ______________

7. During time students were most engaged, what were teachers doing? (Code and tally teachers' instructional behaviors using key below)

All Classes ______________ Developmental Classes ______________ BSI Classes ______________

8. During time students were least engaged, what were teachers doing? (Code and tally teachers' instructional behaviors)

All Classes ______________ Developmental Classes ______________ BSI Classes ______________

Teacher Behavior Code: (See Appendix C. Guide to BSPIP)

O = Orienting

E = Explaining

M = Monitoring

F = Providing Feedback

R = Reinforcing

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Part IV. Analysis of Data

Directions:

- For each factor listed:
    - Review research summary (Appendix A)
    - Scan data from listed sources for evidence relating to the factor
    - Write one paragraph summarizing findings
    - If an improvement is needed, state it as an objective (under "Recommendations")
    - List resources
- Because factors influencing year-end achievement are interrelated and overlapping, multiple sources must be used for information about each factor. After reviewing data from the sources listed, team members should review all other data for additional evidence of the factor under consideration.

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 1. Student Attendance and Engagement.

Definition: Basic skills students regularly attend school and are actively engaged in (circle one) reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics learning activities for a significant period of time each day.

Information Sources: School Information Form, school calendar and schedule, Pre-observation Forms (attendance data), Classroom Observation Summaries (BSI and non-BSI).

Findings: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 1. Student Attendance and Engagement (cont'd.)

Recommendations:

Suggested Resources:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 2. Skills Studied

Definition: Basic skills students study (circle one) reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics skills which are appropriate, given their prior learning and what year-end achievement tests measure.

Information Sources: Achievement Summary; curriculum guides; teacher-made tests, worksheets and other materials; folders of student work; displayed student work; texts and workbooks; Pre-observation Forms (lesson plans); classroom observations (BSI and non-BSI); student interviews (BSI and non-BSI); parent group interview; teacher interviews (BSI and non-BSI); standardized tests used in the program; New Jersey HSPT.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 2. Skills Studied (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ______________________________

Suggested Resources: ______________________________

20:26

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 3. Daily Success

Definition: Basic skills students experience a moderately high level of success in daily reading, language arts, and/or mathematics learning activities. Success refers to the accurate completion of daily assignments, irrespective of whether those assignments address new skills or review previously acquired skills.

Information Sources: Student interviews, (BSI and non-BSI); parent group interviews; report cards, progress reports, classroom observations (BSI and non-BSI); bulletin boards; teacher interviews (BSI and non-BSI).

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 3. Daily Success (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ____________________

Suggested Resources: ____________________

20:28

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 4. Classroom Management

Definition: Teachers of basic skills students manage their classrooms in ways which minimize disruptions and maximize student engagement in learning activities.

Information Sources: All classroom observations; all student, parent and teacher interviews.

Findings: ______________________________

Recommendations: ______________________________

Suggested Resources: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 5. Teacher Expectations and Related Teacher Behaviors

Definition: Teachers of basic skills students believe that all basic skills students are capable of acquiring reading, language arts, and/or mathematics skills, and they provide a classroom environment and instruction consistent with that belief. Teachers communicate positive expectations about achievement to all basic skills students.

Information Sources: Pre-observation Forms (question 7); all classroom observations; all teacher and student interviews; School Climate Observation Summary; parent group interview; progress reports, report cards; teachers' written comments on students' work.

Findings: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 5. Teacher Expectations and Related Teacher Behaviors (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ____________________

Suggested Resources: ____________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 6. Instruction

Definition: Teachers of basic skills students organize their instructional activities and materials in relation to specific skill objectives, use instructional method and materials appropriate for their students, monitor their students' progress continuously, and provide regular feedback to their students.

Information Sources: Pre-observation Form (BSI and non-BSI); curriculum guides; texts and teacher-made materials; classroom observations; all teacher and student and parent interviews; folders of students' corrected work; report card and progress report schedules.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 6. Instruction (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ____________________

Suggested Resources: ____________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 7. Parent/Family Involvement

Definition: Teachers of basic skills students communicate and work with parents and other family members to ensure their active support of their children's learning of reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics skills.

Information Sources: Pre-observations Form (Part III); parent group interview; report card and progress report schedule.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 7. Parent/Family Involvement (cont'd.)

Recommendations:

Suggested Resources:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 8. School Climate

Definition: School leadership and staff maintain a secure, orderly, business-like and supportive environment for students.

Information Sources: Summary of Climate Observations.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 8. School Climate (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ______________________________

Suggested Resources: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 9. Basic Skills Goals and Programs

Definition: District and school leadership communicate clear goals for all students (including basic skills students) in reading, language arts, and/or mathematics and have a well-established and defined program in each of these areas. These programs interrelate and align instructional objectives, assessment procedures, instructional activities and materials, and student records.

Information Sources: Interviews with district, school and program leaders, BSI and non-BSI teachers and students, and parent group; curriculum guides, report cards and progress reports, newsletters, course listings.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 9. Basic Skills Goals and Programs (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ______________________________

Suggested Resources: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 10. Use of Basic Skills Resources

Definition: District and school leadership use basic skills resources (people, materials and equipment) to provide an increased amount of appropriate instruction to the maximum number of eligible students.

Information Sources: School schedule for current and past three academic years; School Information Form; interviews with district, school and program leaders; interviews with BSI teachers.

Findings: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 10. Use of Basic Skills Resources (cont'd.)

Recommendations:

Suggested Resources:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 11. Cooperative Teacher Planning for Improving Individual Student Achievement

Definition: Teachers of basic skills students develop cooperative plans which describe how they will help individual basic skills students to acquire reading, language arts, and/or mathematics skills. They also keep each other informed about each student's progress.

Information Sources: Interviews with building-level leaders, program directors, BSI and non-BSI teachers.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 11. Cooperative Teacher Planning for Improving Individual Student Achievement (cont'd.)

Recommendations:

Suggested Resources:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 12. Supervision and Staff Development

Definition: District and school leadership supervise and provide staff development activities for basic skills teachers in ways which help them improve their management and instructional effectiveness.

Information Sources: Interviews with district, school and program leaders, and with BSI and non-BSI teachers.

Findings: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 12. Supervision and Staff Development (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ______________________________

Suggested Resources: ______________________________

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 13. Organized Program Improvement Efforts

Definition: District and school leaders organize, direct, and manage ongoing efforts to improve effectiveness of the reading, language arts, and/or mathematics programs in which basic skills students participate.

Information Sources: Interviews with district, school and program leaders, BSI and non-BSI teachers.

Findings:

Figure 20

SCHOOL REPORT

Factor 13. Organized Program Improvement Efforts (cont'd.)

Recommendations: ________________________________

Suggested Resources: ________________________________

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part V. Summary of Recommendations

Factor 1. Student Attendance and Engagement

Factor 2. Skills Studied

Factor 3. Daily Success

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part V. Summary of Recommendations (cont'd)

Factor 4. Classroom Management

Factor 5. Teacher Expectations and Related Teacher Behaviors

Factor 6. Instruction

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part V. Summary of Recommendations (cont'd)

Factor 7. Parent/Family Involvement

Factor 8. School Climate

Factor 9. Basic Skills Goals and Programs

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part V. Summary of Recommendations (cont'd)

Factor 10. Use of Basic Skills Resources

Factor 11. Cooperative Teacher Planning

Factor 12. Supervision and Staff Development

Figure 20 (cont'd)

SCHOOL REPORT

Part V. Summary of Recommendations (cont'd)

Factor 13. Organized Program Improvement Efforts

PHASE IV: FOLLOW-UP

PHASE IV: FOLLOW-UP

Overview

LEA leaders and staff review the School Report to determine: 1) whether they agree with the study team's recommendations and 2) which suggestions, in what priority, they would like to implement. They develop a Basic Skills Program Improvement Plan keyed to the recommendations, to be implemented in the academic year following the year of the BSPIP review and evaluated by the district at the end of three years. SEA staff provide technical assistance in: 1) implementing the objectives chosen by the district, 2) locating needed resources, and 3) determining whether the objectives have been reached. Training in exemplary practices based on "effective schools" research may be provided by the regional curriculum service units.

Reviewing the School Report

It is suggested that district and school leaders use the School Report to stimulate inter-group dialogue among staff members as a first step in the development of the Basic Skills Program Improvement Plan. This can help to underscore the fact that basic skills improvement is a responsibility of the total staff.

In determining which recommendations should be given priority, it is suggested that staff members consider the following:

- Urgency. Does the recommendation point to a situation which should be changed immediately?
- Feasibility. Can the change be implemented with resources the district can not only locate but obtain?
- Consensus. Does a sufficient number of staff view the recommended change as necessary and desirable?

Locating Resources

Before deciding on the feasibility of a recommendation the LEA should review both the resources suggested by the study team and the more complete list included in Resources for Basic Skills Program Improvement, which supplements this manual.

Developing the Basic Skills Program Improvement Plan

The Basic Skills Program Improvement Plan developed by the LEA should include answers to the following questions:

1. Which of the 13 factors have been targeted for improvement?
2. Relative to each of these factors, which recommendations will be implemented?
3. How? (Activities, materials and other resources)
4. How will each objective be evaluated over a three-year period?
5. What SEA assistance will be needed?

Development of the Basic Skills Improvement Plan should begin immediately following the delivery of the School Report. Please send one copy of the plan to:

Dr. Sylvia M. Roberts, Director
Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education
New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Responsibilities and Tasks

Following is an outline of the responsibilities and tasks associated with the follow-up phase of the process:

The SEA:

- Assists in implementing targeted objectives.
- Provides information to be used in locating and obtaining resources.
- Provides periodic supplements to the resource guide.

The LEA:

- Reviews the recommendations of the study team.
- Decides which improvements, if any, will be undertaken.
- Develops a Basic Skills Program Improvement Plan and mails it to the SEA.
- Provides or obtains any necessary training for local staff.
- Provides the SEA with information about the results of any changes undertaken in response to the BSPIP review.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SUMMARIES OF RESEARCH

I. Student Factors Related to Year-end Achievement

Recent research has identified three interrelated student factors which can be observed throughout the school year and which can serve as good predictors of students' year-end achievement in reading, language arts, and/or mathematics. These factors are:

- the extent to which students study the skills measured by year-end achievement skills
- the amount of time students are engaged in learning the basic skills
- the level of success students experience on daily learning tasks.

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (Fisher, et al., 1978), examined the independent effects of these factors as well as their combined effects. The study found that student achievement gains were greatest when students were engaged for a significant amount of time on criterion-related learning tasks on which they experienced a moderately high level of success. As Karweit (1983) emphasizes in her recent review of time-on-task research, spending more time on basic skills learning tasks will not increase student achievement unless those tasks are related to skills which the students both need to learn and are ready to learn, and unless those tasks are presented and taught in ways which insure a moderately high level of student success.

Though the interrelation of these factors is critical, this section will consider each factor independently in order to clarify its meaning. Specifically, this section defines each factor and then reviews related research.

Factor 1: Student Attendance and Engagement

Definition

Students regularly attend school and are actively engaged in reading, language arts, and/or mathematics learning activities for a significant period of time each day.

Summary of Research

Since the mid-1970s, researchers have been exploring the relationship between various measures of time and student achievement. This research has demonstrated that: (1) depending on state regulations, district calendars, and personal circumstances, students vary significantly in the number of days they attend school; (2) depending on the district, school, and classroom, students spend widely different amounts of time studying specific content; (3) depending on the classroom, students are engaged in actual learning tasks for significantly different amounts of time; and (4) these differences relate to differences in year-end student achievement.

With regard to student attendance, Wiley and Harnischfeger (1974) found that higher achievers spend more time in school than lower achievers. With regard to allocated time, researchers have described great variation in the amount of time students are involved in instruction, in general, and in basic skills instruction, in particular. Goodlad (1983) reports that the amount of time elementary schools allocate to instruction can vary from 18.5 to 27.5 hours per week. Dishaw (1977) reports that time spent per day for second grade reading and language arts can range from a low of 34 minutes to a high of 127 minutes, and in second grade math from a low of 30 minutes to a high of 59 minutes. In fifth grade reading and language arts, the time spent per day can range from 57 to 156 minutes and in fifth grade math from 23 to 76 minutes. These differences indicate that some students have two or three times the opportunity to learn specific skills (Squires, Huitt, and Segars, 1983).

Yet, even when students have the opportunity to learn for a significant period of time, researchers have determined that they can spend very different amounts of time actively engaged in learning. One study has shown that students in some classrooms are engaged 90 percent of the time, while in other they are engaged 4 percent of the time (Brady, et al., 1977).

Researchers who have been involved in these studies, however, caution educators not to simply interpret these findings as meaning "the more time the better." Analyses of the data (Rim and Coller, 1978) suggest that there are optimum times for classes to be engaged in learning specific content. Those analyses also suggest that different students do need different amounts of time to master specific content. Bloom (1976) has estimated that the slowest ten percent of students may need five or six times as much time to learn the same content as the quickest ten percent. Anderson (1981) suggests that in addition to focusing on students' immediate behavioral response to instruction (e.g., attention to task, initiative in seeking help, and performance on assignments), it is important to consider how students understand the task -- both why it is important and how it is to be done. Finally, in her review of this research, Karweit (1983) warns that educators should not consider time-related factors independent of the curriculum (what skills are taught) and instruction (how they will be taught).

Factor 2: Skills Studied

Definition

Students study reading, language arts, and/or mathematics skills which are appropriate given their prior learning and what year-end achievement tests measure.

Summary of Research

Recent research suggests that students' year-end achievement in reading, language arts, and mathematics depends, in part, upon the extent to which they study skills which: (1) build upon those which they have already mastered, and (2) relate to those which will be assessed by year-end achievement tests.

With regard to students' prior learnings, researchers have determined that up to 80 percent of the variance in post-test scores can be accounted for by pretest scores (Bloom, 1976). This finding suggests that the knowledge and skills students bring to the classroom have a very strong effect on how well students do in year-end assessments. Studies have shown that students who are taught skills which build directly upon what they currently know and can do, will achieve more (Anderson, 1973; Arlin, 1973; Block, 1970; Levin, 1975; and Ozecelik, 1974). As Bloom (1980) concludes, the specific knowledge, abilities, and skills which students have are especially important when sequential learning tasks are involved, and they can be changed through basic skills instruction: they can be learned if absent, reviewed if forgotten, and mastered if not yet learned at a sufficient level.

Researchers have also determined that, depending on their teacher and the instructional materials they use, students may or may not study the knowledge and skills which will be measured by year-end achievement tests. One major research study found that the overlap between what students study and on what they are assessed could be as great as 95 percent or as little as 4 percent. The study also found that students' year-end achievement gains were related to the amount of overlap between what they studied and on what they were assessed (Brady, et al., 1977).

Factor 3: Daily Success

Definition

Students experience a moderately high level of success in daily reading, language arts, and/or mathematics learning activities. Success refers to the accurate completion of daily assignments, irrespective of whether those assignments address new skills or review previously acquired skills.

Summary of Research

Research has established a strong relationship between student year-end achievement scores and students' success rate on specific learning tasks. The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (Fisher, et al., 1978 and 1979) found that students who performed daily reading and math assignments at a high rate of success (i.e., students comprehended and retained a large portion of the information presented to them, as determined by a test after instruction) did better on year-end achievement tests than those who performed at lower rates of success. The study found, however, that actual success rates varied greatly from student to student. In the classrooms studied, some students experienced success on 88 percent of the tasks, while others experienced success on 9 percent of the tasks.

Though a success rate of approximately 75 percent seems optimal for many students, the appropriate rate for individual students appears to be related to other student characteristics. For example, students who have high achievement motivation and low fear of failure appear to perform best at a lower success rate (e.g., 60 percent correct), while students with low achievement motivation and a high fear of failure appear to need a higher rate of success (e.g., 90 percent correct) (Fisher, et al., 1978 and 1979).

The research on success suggests that teachers must design their instruction in ways that will produce optimal success rates for the students involved (Crawford, et al., 1975). Research also shows that students' experience of success and approval over a large number of learning tasks and over a relatively long period of time leads not only to higher achievement, but also to a generalized attitude toward themselves and learning. Students who consistently experience success will have positive views of themselves as learners. These views, in turn, will help them achieve as they approach new or difficult learning tasks (Bloom, 1976).

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II. CLASSROOM-RELATED FACTORS

Considerable research has been conducted about factors which teachers can affect and which appear to influence student engagement, student coverage of skills, student success on daily tasks, and ultimately, student performance on year-end achievement tests. Out of a number of classroom factors which meet one or more of these criteria, the study teams will collect information about the following:

- the extent to which teachers plan, organize, and manage their classrooms in ways which minimize disruptions and maximize student engagement in learning activities
- the extent to which teachers expect their students to acquire reading, language arts, and mathematics skills
- the extent to which teachers plan and manage instruction, and teach in ways which insure that students learn the skills assessed on year-end achievement tests
- the extent to which teachers involve parents/family members in support of their students' basic skills learning.

Factor 4: Classroom Management

Definition:

Teachers manage their classrooms in ways which minimize disruptions and maximize student engagement in learning activities.

Summary of Research

An extensive body of research has investigated how teachers' management of their classrooms affects student behaviors (Weber, et al., 1983). This research has identified some teacher characteristics and behaviors which appear to relate to smoothly operating classrooms where most time is devoted to instruction and learning. A significant study in this line of research was Kounin's (1970) work. He found that the teacher characteristics of "with-it-ness" (i.e., the ability to be aware of student's actions and to communicate that awareness) and "effective overlapping" (i.e., dealing with more than one matter at a time) are strongly related to managerial success. Kounin's findings are substantially supported by subsequent studies (e.g., Emmer and Evertson, 1980), which found that effective teachers, as managers, know what their students need to function in the classroom setting and teach such "survival skills" to their students. These studies have also determined that teachers' attention to these skills at the beginning of the school year reduces the amount of time given to classroom management concerns during the rest of the year.

Research shows that teachers who are effective managers are able to:

- Analyze classroom tasks. Better managers demonstrate an ability to analyze the tasks of the first few weeks of school in precise detail. Their presentations to the students about rules, procedures, and assignments are very clear, and they provide specific feedback to students when inappropriate behavior occurs.

- Teach the going-to-school skills. Better managers incorporate the teaching of rules and procedures as a very important part of instruction during the first few weeks. That is, they teach going-to-school skills by providing practice and moving through procedures, giving feedback, responding to signals, and pointing out to students when they are behaving appropriately.

- See the classroom from the students' perspective. In organizing their classrooms and in introducing students to new routines throughout the year, effective teachers appear to see through the eyes of their students. They also seem to be able to predict what would confuse or distract their students and what would be of immediate concern to them.

- Monitor student behavior. The more successful teachers monitor students closely during the first few weeks and deal with problems immediately. They do not ignore deviations from classroom rules and procedures.

(Emmer and Evertson, 1980; Duke, 1982)

In synthesizing the literature on classroom management, Lasley (1981) identified four generalizations about effective classroom management that can be used to monitor teacher behaviors. They are: (1) teachers' development and implementation of a workable set of classroom rules, (2) teachers' structuring and monitoring classroom activities to minimize disruptive behaviors, (3) teachers' definition of inappropriate behaviors to which they respond quickly and consistently, and (4) teachers' response to inappropriate behavior without denigration of students.

Factor 5: Teacher Expectations and Related Teacher Behaviors

Definition

Teachers believe that all students are capable of acquiring reading, language arts, and/or mathematics skills, and that they can provide a classroom environment and instruction which is consistent with that belief. Teachers communicate positive expectations about achievement to all students.

Summary of Research

In the late 1960s, a number of studies sought to establish a relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Though some initial results were positive, these studies were severely criticized from a methodological perspective (Snow and Elashoff, 1971). More recently, research has shown that teachers treat high and low achieving students differently and that this differential treatment has a detrimental effect on the performance of the low achieving students (Brophy and Good, 1972; Smith, 1980; Good, 1981). According to this recent research, some of the different ways in which teachers treat high and low-achieving students include:

- seating low-achieving students farther away from the teacher
- paying less attention to low-achieving students (e.g., by making eye contact less often)

- calling on low-achieving students less frequently to answer classroom questions
- waiting less time for low-achieving students to answer questions
- failing to provide cues or to ask follow-up questions to help low-achieving students answer the questions
- criticizing low-achieving students more frequently for incorrect answers
- praising low-achieving students less often for correct or marginal responses
- giving low-achieving students less feedback and less detailed feedback
- demanding less effort and less work from low-achieving students
- interrupting the performance of low-achieving students more frequently

(Good, 1981)

As a result of this research, some researchers have advocated supervision and staff development programs to help teachers: (1) determine the extent to which they treat high and low-achieving students differentially, and (2) modify those behaviors that may be detrimental to the performance of low-achieving students. As a cautionary note, Brophy (1972) urges teachers not to interpet this research as implying the same expectations for all students. He argues that teachers need to set realistic expectations that recognize individual student differences in current performances (not past history) and serve to encourage them to achieve as much as they can (Communication Quarterly, 1983).

Factor 6: Instruction

Definition

Teachers organize their instructional activities and materials in relation to specific skill objectives, use instructional methods and materials appropriate for their students, monitor their students' progress continuously, and provide regular feedback to their students.

Summary of Research

Extensive research has been conducted to identify characteristics of effective instruction. Some of that research has focused on how teachers organize and manage instruction. Other research has sought to identify those teaching and learning activities which contribute most to student success and achievement.

With regard to organizing and planning instruction in the basic skills, research suggests that teachers need to know: (1) what skills are the highest priority for them to teach, (2) what prerequisite skills students need to acquire those skills, (3) what specific skills their students have actually mastered, (4) what ways their students learn best, and (5) what materials and resources are available for teaching each skill or set of skills. With this knowledge, teachers are in a position to decide which learning tasks students should undertake next.

With regard to teaching, research (Good and Grouws, 1979; Good, et al., 1983) has identified a number of events which seem to characterize quality instruction. These include: (1) periodic and systematic review of previously learned concepts and skills; (2) an overview of what is to be learned and why it is important; (3) explanation of the concepts and skills to be learned combined with informal testing of student understanding; (4) an opportunity for students to practice what they have learned -- first, in a guided and controlled situation, and then independently; (5) an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of what they have learned; and (6) continuous feedback at each step of the way. Research has shown that the concepts and skills being taught and individual teaching style influence how these events occur; however, it has also shown the advantage of presenting lessons organized around such events. In fact, with respect to the teaching of elementary mathematics, Good has developed a training program aimed at helping teachers to include all of these events in their lessons and to increase the time they spend on such critical events as conducting a review, developing the content of the lesson, actively helping students with seatwork, and assigning and checking homework.

In order to support the ongoing cycles of planning and instruction, research on instruction also suggests the need for teachers to monitor and maintain a continuous record of student progress. That record describes student success on daily assignments, performance on unit tests aimed at assessing mastery of specific content, and performance on review tasks designed to assess retention. It provides critical information for teachers' plannning of lessons and units, and teachers' planning of assignments for individual students. The record can also support teachers' efforts to involve parents (Factor 7).

In a presentation at a regional conference for Chapter I state and local staff, Anderson (1982) summarized what he believes research has shown about effective teaching. Effective teachers:

- know their students
- assign appropriate tasks to their students
- orient their students
- monitor their students
- relate teaching and testing
- promote student involvement or engagement in the learning process
- provide continuity for their students
- correct identified student errors and misunderstandings.

Factor 7: Parent/Family Involvement

Definition

Teachers communicate and work with parents and other family members to ensure their active support of their children's learning of reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics skills.

Summary of Research

Research has clearly documented the relationship between home conditions and student achievement. In fact, some international studies on student achievement have found that home conditions account for more of the variation in achievement scores, both within and among countries, than the school curriculum or the quality of instruction (Bloom, 1981).

Current reviews of teacher and school-initiated parent participation programs suggest that such programs consist of three major activities: (1) parental involvement in activities which help to shape school policies and programs; (2) parent-school contacts in which parents learn about their children's school performance and ways they can help improve it, and in which teachers learn about students' interests and capabilities, and parental interest in helping their children; and (3) school-encouraged learning activities in the home through which children gain skills and knowledge that reinforce classroom instruction (Moles, 1982; Newcombe, 1982).

Research on these activities suggest that although parent involvement, in general, has positive effects, those activities which sought to train parents in tutoring techniques have been the most successful (Matusek, 1977). For example, in their study of parent involvement activities associated with federal compensatory education programs, Stearns, et al., (1973) found that pre-school programs which involved parents as "tutors" had higher student achievement and that those effects varied directly with the intensity and length of the program. In their study of some Follow Through parent involvement programs, Gordon, et al., (1974) found that those programs which helped parents develop and use with their children what they called "desirable teaching behaviors" had higher student performance on reading and mathematics tests. Some of the techniques these programs encouraged parents to use include: providing appropriate study space for their children, reading aloud to their children, actively listening to their children discuss their learning assignments, providing their children with specific feedback on work completed, offering their children personal encouragement and support.

Although public opinion surveys have shown that parents and teachers agree that parental involvement in schools is desirable, research and experience suggest that the implementation of parent participation programs encounter many barriers and, in many cases, is superficial. The common obstacles to meaningful parent involvement in children's education include: (1) parents' and teachers' conflicting time constraints, (2) parents' and schools' differing perceptions of learning priorities,

(3) teachers' low expectations of parents' efforts, (4) teachers' inability to handle their students' family problems, (5) parents' inability to help students with homework they do not understand, and (6) a history of negative communication between the home and school (Moles, 1978; Newcombe, 1982).

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III. PROGRAM, SCHOOL, AND DISTRICT-RELATED FACTORS

Although what students achieve is most directly influenced by what happens in classrooms, recent research has identified a number of program, school, and district factors which can affect what happens in classrooms and what students achieve. Out of the numerous program, school, and district factors which do influence teachers' management of classrooms, their expectations, their approach to instruction, and the involvement of parents, three have been selected for consideration:

- the extent to which schools are orderly, business-like, yet pleasant work places
- the extent to which school and district leadership communicate specific student learning goals and have a well-defined and implemented "basic skills" program
- the extent to which the district uses its resources to increase the amount of appropriate instruction for the maximum number of students eligible for compensatory basic skills instruction.

This section defines each of these factors more completely and summarizes some of the research which suggests how they can affect what happens in classrooms and what students achieve.

Factor 8: School Climate

Definition

School leadership and staff maintain a secure, orderly, business-like, pleasant environment for students.

Summary of Research

Research on effective schools consistently reports that a school must provide a secure, orderly, business-like, pleasant environment (Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Duckett, et al., 1980; Edmonds and Frederiksen, 1978; Rutter, et al., 1979). In general, these studies found that schools which have safe, orderly environments have effective security systems, a staff-enforced code of behavior, a student-enforced code of behavior, and a positive reward system. Together, these features create an environment which operates with a minimum of distraction, disruption, and confusion. Such an environment appears also to influence the climate of classrooms. Schools which are orderly and business-like work places tend to have orderly and business-like classrooms, and such classrooms facilitate instruction and student learning.

Some of the effective schools research (Rutter, 1979) and the federal study of safe and violent schools (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978) describes the critical role which principals play in establishing and maintaining an appropriate school climate. Specifically, principals of such schools are described as:

- insuring pleasant working conditions through building maintenance and decoration
- developing with staff systematic discipline policies and communicating them to all staff, students, and parents
- actively supporting the implementation for the discipline policies by providing inservice for staff, enforcing them in a fair and equitable manner, and revising them as circumstances require
- providing opportunities for students to hold positions of responsibility in the school -- particularly, with respect to discipline and the upkeep and improvement of the building
- recognizing publicly in meaningful ways the talents and achievements of many students and staff.

Factor 9: "Basic Skills" Goals and Programs

Definition

District and school leadership communicate clear goals for all students (including basic skills students) in reading, language arts, and/or mathematics and have a well-established and defined program in each of these skill areas. These programs interrelate and align instructional objectives, assessment procedures, instructional activities and materials, and student records.

Summary of Research

Over the past five years, research has been conducted to identify characteristics of effective schools. That research has found that effective schools emphasize academic learning, that such emphasis is a matter of public record, and that it is well understood by administrators, teachers, parents, and students (Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Rutter, et al., 1979; and Weber, 1971). That research also suggests the critical roles principals and other administrators can play in keeping the academic goals of the district and school before the school community -- for example, by regularly reporting the results of assessment activities and by recognizing, displaying, and rewarding class and individual student achievement (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Wellisch, et al., 1978).

The literature of curriculum, curriculum planning, and curriculum development has traditionally described the four elements of a well-defined skills program (i.e., instructional objectives, assessment procedures, instructional activities and materials, and student records) and has recommended that these elements be interrelated and aligned. The Instructional Dimensions Study (Brady, et al., 1977) investigated the extent to which districts and schools have well-defined "basic skills" programs. It found that many districts and schools did not have well-developed "basic skills" programs, that frequently the objectives listed in the curriculum guides did not match the content of the textbooks and supplementary instructional materials being used, and that neither the objectives nor the content of the textbooks were being fully assessed by year-end achievement tests. The study also established that districts and schools which had their objectives, instructional materials, and tests well aligned tended to report high student achievement.

The importance of having a well-defined "basic skills" program is further reinforced by a review of the reading, language arts, and mathematics programs which have been validated by the U.S. Department of Education's Joint Dissemination Review Panel. Most of those validated programs have well-developed skills arrays, instructional activities and methods keyed to those skills, assessment procedures for the program's objectives, and a system for monitoring and reporting student progress (Holzman and Boes, 1973).

Factor 10: Use of Resources

Definition

District and school leadership use available resources (people, materials, and equipment) to provide an increased amount of appropriate instruction to the maximum number of students eligible for compensatory basic skills instruction.

Summary of Research

Compensatory programs are, by definition, supplementary programs. In practice, their resources are used to employ additional teachers and aides and to purchase a variety of supplementary instructional materials and equipment. These, in turn, are used with concentrations of eligible students in eligible schools.

This factor brings together the current understanding of student and classroom factors related to year-end student achievement (see Factors 1 through 6) and the experience of educators who have been working to make the supplementary compensatory education programs as effective as possible. It suggests that programs that use their resources in ways which increase significantly the amount of appropriate instruction which eligible students receive will tend to have higher year-end student achievement in reading, language arts, and/or mathematics. Given the earlier discussion of student and classroom-related factors, increased amounts of appropriate instruction should be evidenced by eligible students:

- being engaged in skill-learning activities for an increased amount of time each week
- studying through those learning activities skills which build on those which they have previously mastered
- studying through those learning activities skills which will be assessed on year-end achievement tests
- experiencing in those learning activities a higher level of success.

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V. PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT-RELATED FACTORS

In addition to exploring conditions and practices which relate to the achievement of basic skills students in reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics, the team will gather information about district/school structures and procedures for making improvements. These structures and procedures are of interest, because research on effective schools suggests that such schools are, in part, characterized by an ongoing concern about how they can become more effective and by the existence of specific structures and procedures for improving program and instructional practices. Of specific interest are structures and procedures by which:

- teachers plan and problem-solve with respect to the needs of individual students
- district and school staff supervise teachers and provide staff development opportunities
- district and school staff organize, direct, and manage ongoing program improvement efforts.

This section defines more completely each of these factors and summarizes some of the research and experience which suggests how these structures and procedures can be made more effective.

Factor 11: Cooperative Teacher Planning for Improving Individual Student Achievement

Definition

Teachers of basic skills students develop cooperative plans which describe how they will help individual students improve their reading, writing/language arts, and/or mathematics skills. They also keep each other informed about each student's progress.

Summary of Research

This factor is derived from "effective schools" research and the nature of compensatory basic skills programs. Specifically, Little (1981) observed that in more effective schools: (1) staff were governed by a norm of "collegiality"; (2) teachers engaged in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice; and (3) principals explicitly supported the development of collegiality and teachers' sharing by stating their expectations, modeling the desired behavior, providing released time, and publicly recognizing collegial efforts. These findings, when juxtaposed with supplementary, appropriate instruction (see Factor 10), suggest that teachers who have the opportunity to talk about individual students' achievement and needs and who develop cooperative instructional plans will be more likely to provide an increased amount of appropriate instruction.

Factor 12: Supervision and Staff Development

Definition

District and school leadership supervise teachers in ways which help them improve their management and instructional effectiveness. They also provide staff development activities which help teachers improve their effectiveness.

Summary of Research

Much of the variation in what students learn from one classroom to another can be attributed to differences in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individual teachers. A traditional responsibility of program directors, supervisors, and principals is to help teachers continue to develop as professionals by: (1) improving their planning, instruction, and management skills; (2) increasing their knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy; and (3) assisting them to implement changes in the district/school basic skills programs. Generally, such help has been provided under the aegis of district/school supervision or staff development programs. At present, the characteristics of effective supervision and staff development programs are not well established by research. However, there is an extensive literature which suggests what needs to be considered in designing and conducting such programs.

First, there is the suggestion that "adult" learners are significantly different from "child" learners (Knowles, 1978; Lewis, et al, 1977; Massey, 1980). Effective supervision and staff development programs need to be designed so that they acknowledge:

- adults' extensive knowledge and experience
- adults' view of themselves as independent and interdependent persons who are self-directed, socially responsible, and competent
- adults' concerns when confronted with needs to learn and change.

In addition, the design of such programs needs to be responsive to individual differences in expertise, learning styles, motivation, and other pertinent characteristics.

Consistent with the literature on adult learning, the literature on supervisory practices advocates a "clinical" model, characterized by:

- a collegial relationship between supervisors and teacher
- an ongoing process of cooperative planning, supervisor observation and data collection, independent supervisor and teacher analysis of the collected data, cooperative review of the analyses and their implications for action, and teacher initiation of action.

This literature suggests that such a model, well-implemented, can help teachers modify their classroom behavior in the desired directions. It also includes warnings of how difficult it can be to implement the "clinical" model -- for example, defining the improvement desired, acquiring the skills required by the role of supervisor, and scheduling sufficient time to carry out the process (Sullivan, 1980).

The literature on staff development is full of prescriptions as to critical elements of an effective staff development program. One list developed by Knowles (1978) suggests these elements:

- a climate characterized by mutuality, respect, and collaboration
- a mechanism for cooperative planning, including mutual diagnosis and negotiations
- learning activities which are problem-centered, involve experiential techniques, and are sequenced in terms of readiness
- mutual re-diagnosis and evaluation of program effectiveness.

Knowles recommends the use of learning contracts as a tool for structuring staff development activities consistent with the above elements.

In discussing the types of activities in which adults need to engage in order to learn, Andrews, et al. (1981) suggests five:

- exploration (opportunity for learners to get involved with content and materials in their own way)
- interaction (opportunity for participants to share relevant experiences, feelings and attitudes with other participants)
- active participation (activities which require active listening, structured observation, working with materials, physical movement)
- reflection and articulation (opportunity to consider specific implications of content and in the process to clarify understanding of that content)
- syntheses or integration (opportunity for participants to integrate new learning with what they already know and do).

With respect to the learning of new teaching skills, Joyce and Showers (1980) describe four activities which they believe are required:

- a presentation of the theoretical basis for the teaching method or skill to be taught

- demonstration of the skill
- practice and feedback in a simulated setting
- coaching as teachers apply skill in their classrooms.

They stress the importance of the last step, yet they note that it is the one which is usually omitted from teacher training programs.

Factor 13: Organized Program Improvement Efforts

Definition

District and school leadership organize, direct, and manage ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness of basic skills improvement programs.

Summary of Research

Research on "effective schools" suggests that one characteristic of these schools is that they are concerned with continuous improvement (Little, 1981). This research also describes the critical role which the principal and department chairperson play in establishing expectations for ongoing improvement and in creating the conditions which support organized improvement efforts. Specifically, Little observed principals stating what improvements are desired, assigning staff and allocating resources such as released time, actively participating in the efforts, publicly recognizing the achievement of some efforts as well as tolerating the inevitable failure of others, and defending those efforts in response to countermovements from both within and outside the school.

Reinforcing Little's findings are studies which sought to identify district and school conditions which contributed to program implementation and continuation. Corbett, et al., (1982) identified four critical conditions which district and school leadership could influence and which were critical for successful program implementation and continuation: (1) district/school priorities; (2) availability of adequate staff time to participate in planning, development, and training activities; (3) incentives for staff to implement the new program and use the new practices; and (4) stability of staff assignments. Berman, et al., (1978), in their study of federally-sponsored improvement projects, identified for successful implementation of program changes the importance of: regular project meetings for planning, feedback, and problem-solving purposes; teacher participation in project decisions; local materials development; and principal participation in training. They also identified the importance of district management, principal support, and good staff working relationships for the continuation and institutionalization of new programs and practices.

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APPENDIX B

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A TWO-DAY, ONE-SCHOOL VISIT

Specifications for visit:

- One K-8 school (Juniper) to be visited in the Forest School District by a 5-member Study Team: (Dr. Wilson, Team Leader; Ms. Lopez; Mr. Green; Ms. Henry; Mrs. Golden)
- The review will focus on the BSI program in reading, grades 7 and 8
- Observations of 4 basic skills classes (2 in each grade) for at least 20 minutes each (including the first and/or last 20 minutes of the class period; two observers in each class)
- Interviews with district staff, students and parents, as follows:

District and Building Administrators (20 minutes each)

Superintendent of Schools	Dr. Romano
Basic Skills Director	Dr. Jackson
District Language Arts Supervisor:	Mrs. Weiss
Building Principal	Ms. McDonald

Basic Skills Teachers (40 minutes each)

Grade 7 Reading	Mrs. Zapata
Grade 7 Reading	Ms. Hart
Grade 8 Reading	Mr. Brown
Grade 8 Reading	Mrs. Myers

Basic Skills Students (10 minutes each)

4 from grade 7
4 from grade 8

Developmental English Teachers (10 minutes each)

2 who are assigned at least one section of grade 7 that includes some BSI students

2 who are assigned at least one section of grade 8 that includes some BSI students

2 from grade 7 English classes
2 from grade 8 English classes

Parents of Basic Skills Students

As available for group or individual meeting(s)

- Since grades 7 and 8 are departmentalized, the visit schedule will be coordinated with the regular daily schedule of 1 morning homeroom period and eight 40-minute class periods.

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A TWO-DAY, ONE-SCHOOL VISIT

Time	Activity	Location	External Study Team Assignment
8:10 - 8:50	Team arrives; introduction Superintendent and staff orient External Study Team to the district, its schools, developmental English program, and its BSI program in reading Local staff and External Study Team review visit purpose and schedule	District administration building - Conference Room	All members
9:00 - 9:20	External Study Team Leader interviews the Superintendent, Dr. Romano	Superintendent's office	Dr. Wilson (Team Leader)
	One team member interviews Basic Skills Program Director, Dr. Jackson	District administration building-Conference Room B	Mrs. Golden
	One team member interviews building principal, Ms. McDonald	District administration building	Ms. Henry
	Observe school climate	Grounds, corridors, classrooms, cafeteria etc.	All members

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A TWO-DAY, ONE-SCHOOL VISIT

Time	Activity	Location	External Study Team Assignment
9:40 - 10:00	2 team members observe Mrs. Myers' grade 8 reading class	Room 125	Dr. Wilson Ms. Lopez
	2 team members observe Mrs. Zapata's grade 7 reading class	Room 104	Mrs. Golden Ms. Henry
	1 team member interviews 2 non-BSI students, grade 7	Library	Mr. Green
	Observe school climate	Grounds, corridors, cafeteria, library etc.	All members
10:30 - 10:50	2 team members observe Mr. Brown's grade 8 reading class	Room 104	Mrs. Golden Ms. Henry
	2 team members observe Ms. Hart's grade 7 reading class	Room 125	Dr. Wilson Ms. Lopez
	1 team member interviews 2 non-BSI students grade 8	Library	Mr. Green

278

277

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A TWO-DAY, ONE-SCHOOL VISIT

Time	Activity	Location	External Study Team Assignment
11:10 - 11:30	1 team member interviews grade 7 reading teacher, Mrs. Zapata	Room 112	Ms. Henry
	1 team member interviews 2 grade 8 English teachers	Library	Mrs. Golden
	1 team member interviews grade 8 reading teacher, Mrs. Myers	Room 125	Dr. Wilson
	2 team members interview 4 BSI reading students grade 7	.Library	Ms. Lopez Mr. Green
	Observe school climate	Grounds, corridors cafeteria, library, etc.	All members
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch	Conference Room A	All Members
12:45 - 1:20	Observe school climate	All locations, as above	All members
1:30 - 1:50	2 team members interview 4 BSI students, grade 8	Library	Mr. Green
	1 team member interviews grade 7 reading teacher, Mr. Brown	Room 125	Ms. Henry
	1 team member interviews grade 7 reading teacher, Ms. Hart	Conference Room	Ms. Lopez

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A TWO-DAY, ONE-SCHOOL VISIT

Time	Activity	Location	External Study Team Assignment
1:30 - 1:50 (cont'd)	1 team member interviews District Language Arts Supervisor, Mrs. Weiss	Principal's office	Dr. Wilson
2:20 - 3:00	Complete observation forms and other data-gathering instruments. Review list of items needed for preparation of School Report	Conference Room B	All members
2nd Day			
7:30 - 8:30	Before-work breakfast with BSI parents*	Cafeteria	All members
8:45 - 9:30	2 members do make-up interviews and/or observations	Conference Room A	Mr. Green Ms. Lopez
	3 members review supporting material	Conference Room B	Dr. Wilson Mrs. Golden Ms. Henry
9:45 - Conclusion	Prepare rough draft of School Report	Conference Room B	All members

*Baby-sitting by student volunteers will be available in room 134. An adult chaperon will be present.

Appendix C

Teachers' Instructional Behaviors

Orienting	Activities through which a teacher provides students an overview of the lesson. Teachers state what students are to learn, how they are to learn it, how long they have to learn it, and how they are to demonstrate what they have learned. They also describe how the lesson builds on previous lessons and uses skills already acquired.
Explaining	Activities that develop a lesson. Teachers demonstrate, model, explain, and discuss lesson content. If necessary, they repeat or modify these activities to ensure student understanding.
Monitoring	Activities by which the teacher collects information about student comprehension and ability to demonstrate specific skills. When presenting material, teachers watch for verbal and non-verbal clues from students, and they ask students questions. They check on seat-work by circulating through the classroom, looking at student responses, and asking questions about that work. They also use short tests.

Providing Feedback	Activities through which teachers give students information on their performance. They let students know what progress they are making with respect to the lesson's objectives; they correct errors and misunderstandings. They also give students suggestions on how they might best approach a task.
Reinforcing	Activities in which teachers reward student learning. They explicitly praise students for completion of tasks, correct answers, and inventive solutions. They give students specific rewards for their achievement.

Appendix D

Students' Classroom Behaviors

Engaged

Involved in or attending to instruction.

In-transition

Daily, routine classroom activities or preparatory or "in-between" activities (e.g., distributing, setting up, or gathering equipment, supplies, materials, or furniture; taking roll; cleaning up; putting on or taking off coats; standing in line; getting a drink or washing hands in room; putting headings on papers; listening to nonacademic directions; getting ready or waiting for next activity to begin; waiting for teacher's help; turning through pages in book).

Off-task

Socializing

Two or more persons who are interacting socially (e.g., talking, whispering, laughing, wrestling, hitting, note passing, walking together); watching others socialize.

Discipline

Adult is reprimanding a student, a student is being punished, or a student is watching another student being scolded (e.g., one student is being scolded and whole class is listening, heads down on desk for punishment).

Unoccupied/Observing

Sitting or standing alone, wandering about with no evident purpose or goal, watching other people, engaging in unassigned activities, or playing with materials

Out of Room

Temporarily out of room (e.g., bathroom, errand, nurse, office).

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